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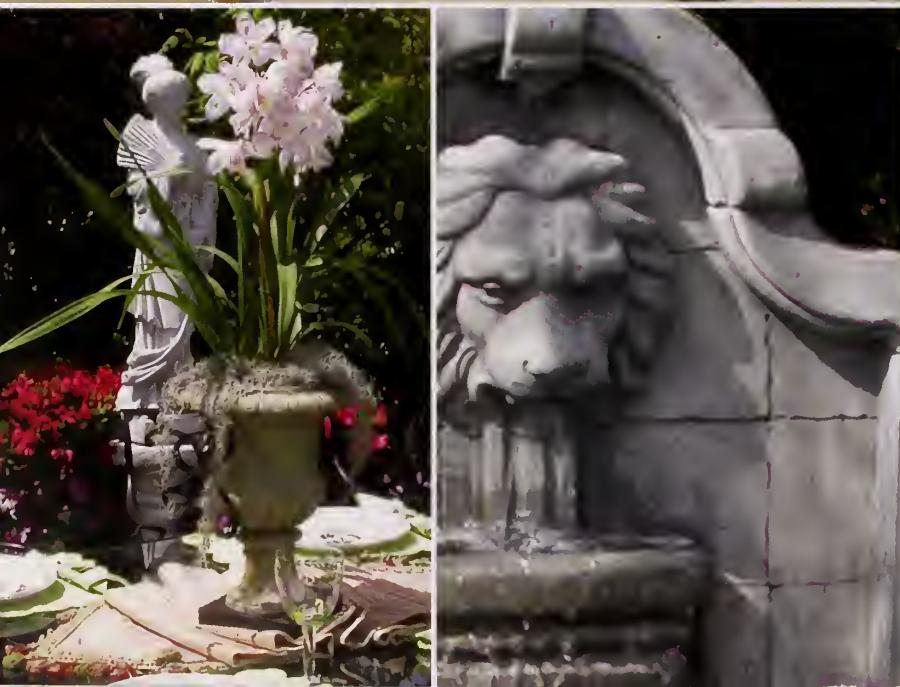
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Special 2004 Philadelphia Flower Show Issue



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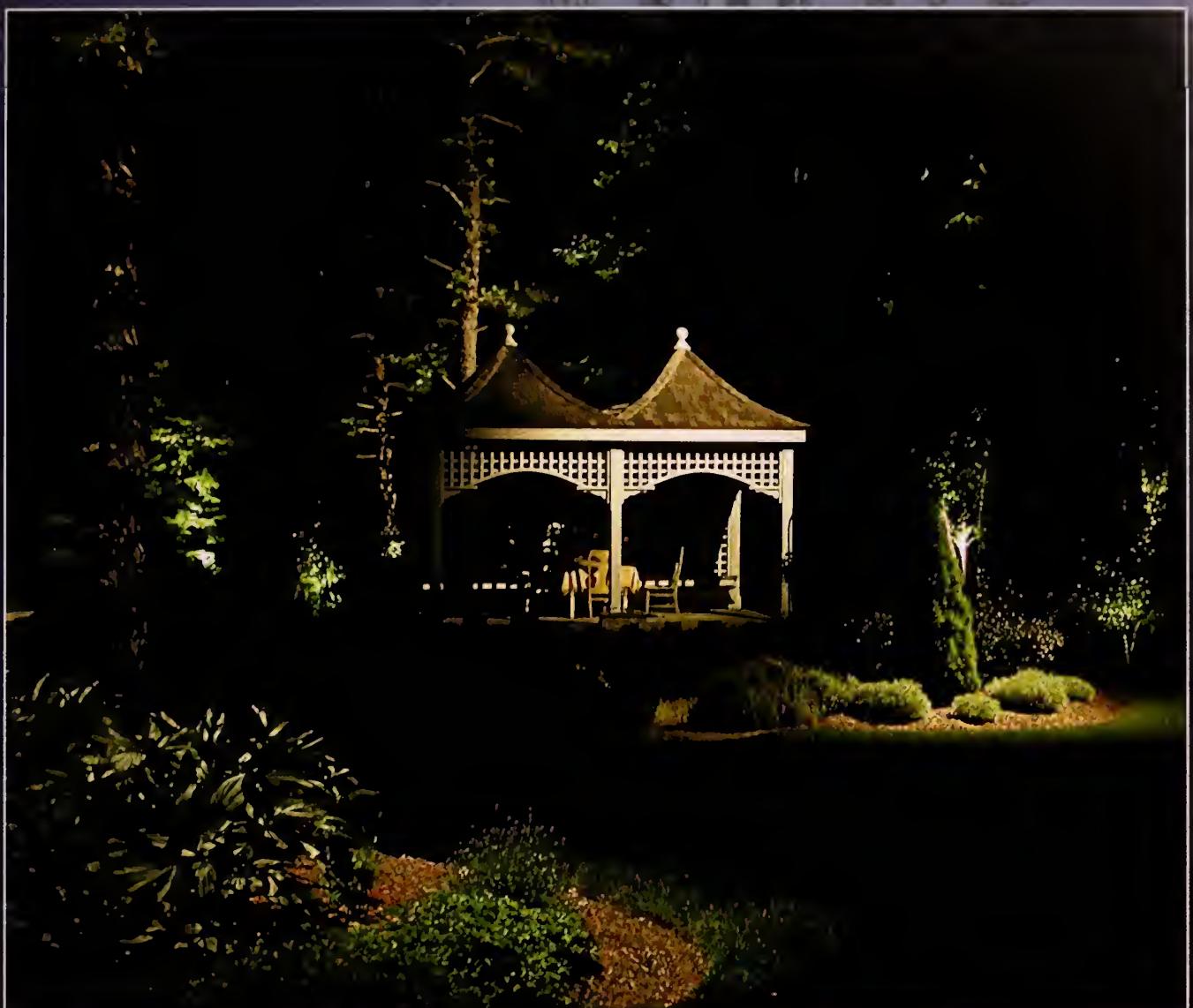
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10 The 2004 Flower Show

Ever wonder about the ins-and-outs of the Philadelphia Flower Show's "Central Feature" exhibit? Join John Gannon as he takes you through a tropical paradise of orchids, swims amidst the wonders of an underwater coral reef, and floats through a whimsical look at heaven. Learn a little about the three exhibitors who have been tirelessly working to create this grand welcome to the Show.

16 Coffee Table Flowers

In celebration of a very special milestone for the Flower Show, PHS presents its first coffee table book, *The Philadelphia Flower Show: Celebrating 175 Years*, by award-winning garden writer Adam Levine and long-time Show exhibitor Ray Rogers. Here is a sneak peek at this wonderful book, which also features the sumptuous photography and warm, amusing anecdotes galore.

26 Must-Have Plants!

What are the latest, greatest plants on the market? There are hundreds, of course, but somehow Patricia A. Taylor narrows it down to a list of 10 exciting trendsetters. Come see wonders waiting for your 2004 garden.

32 Inta-the-Woods

On a wooded lot outside of West Chester, PA, artist Inta Krombolz has been working on a 3 1/2-acre garden of earthly delights for the past quarter century. This ever-changing oasis is also filled with Inta's elegant iron sculptures. Join Ilene Sternberg (along with a curious chocolate-labrador retriever) for an awe-inducing stroll.

COLUMNS

40 Foliage Matters: A Confederacy of the Blue and the Gray

By Nancy J. Ondra

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By Marilyn Romenesco

44 Classified Ads

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover photo by Floyd Limbos, Doylestown, PA

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Saying goodbye is always hard to do, and for many people connected to PHS—staff, volunteers and exhibitors—we will face a really hard goodbye shortly. After 32 years with PHS, 24 as Flower Show designer and in more recent years also as director, Ed Lindemann will retire from PHS at the end of March. After the Show closes, Ed will unfold a new chapter of his life as he heads north to join his wife Carol in a house they purchased several years ago on Cape Cod.

In anticipation of writing this piece, I emailed a few staff members and volunteers who have known Ed for a long time to ask them the three words they would use to describe Ed. Although some were distressed that I had only allowed them three shots, several themes developed.

“Artistic,” “theatrical” and “creative,” are words I would have used myself to describe a person who has created an unbelievable string of fantastic designs for the fabulous Philadelphia Flower Show.

When Ed first joined PHS, the Show theme was usually a generic salute to spring, such as “Prelude to Spring,” his first solo Show in 1980. By 1984, Ed’s imagination was into high gear and he was taking us on a “Trip to the Orient.” The following year we were celebrating gardens in Britain, before we returned in ‘86 to “Hometown, U.S.A.” In the ‘90s, Ed’s creations included “La Passion du Jardin,” “This Land is Your Land” (1996, our first year at the Pennsylvania Convention Center) and “Horizons for Discovery.” With Ed there is always a discovery on his horizon, which is why some of his colleagues described him as “visionary,” “cutting edge” and “original.” One of my respondents even called him “The Flower Show Wizard.”

Several people used the words “dedicated” and “loyal” in their emails. These are adjectives that describe so well Ed’s years with PHS. Throughout this time he has always had the best interests of the organization at heart and no more so than during his first Flower Show. That year, legend has it, he developed a raging flu during set-up

week, but in the spirit of the good trooper he is, Ed worked 16 hours a day with a high fever—and lost 10 pounds before the Show closed.

One of our staff members described Ed as “cool, calm and cute.” In the interests of decency, I’m going to pass over the last word, but the first two are ones that appropriately

describe Ed during Flower Show set-up week. As they near the Convention Center, our exhibitors’ adrenaline starts to flow. By the time they hit the floor many of them are moving at high speed, focusing on their exhibits to the exclusion of all others. As designer and director, Ed has had an uncanny ability to “manage” an endless array of complex situations, giving a little here, enforcing a rule there and doing it all with a smile and a reassuring pat on the back for those whose adrenaline is pouring over everyone and every thing.

On behalf of his many admirers, I offer Ed many, many thanks for all he has done for us all at PHS. To me

and many others he has been a wonderfully supportive colleague and friend. To PHS his guidance of the Show has brought recognition and admiration. The Flower Show’s success is the product of many, but to Ed I give a huge chunk of the credit for nursing it along to the point where it is now known as the “best indoor annual flower show in the world.” We are all proud of that designation and proud of the role Ed has played in achieving this recognition.

Ed, best wishes to you and to Carol. We’ll be up to take a walk on the beach with you and the four-legged members of the family, Percy and Sam.



Jane Pepper

Jane G. Pepper, President
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society



Photos this page by Alan Detrick

Top: Saucer magnolia
Bottom: Forsythia

SHORTEN the ROAD to SPRING

The days are longer, the sun is stronger, and we gradually seem to be getting closer to spring. To hurry it along by a few weeks, bring flowering branches indoors and force them into bloom.

Forsythia and pussy willow are two of the easiest, but you'll also have good luck with such fruits as apple and peach, early-blooming Korean rhododendrons (*Rhododendron mucronulatum*), quince, and daphnes. Generally, the earlier the plants come into bloom, the easier it will be to force them indoors this month because their buds are already swollen and ready to pop.

Look around the garden for the most likely branches to cut, bearing in mind that you should cut only those that you won't miss for the rest of the season. In other words, do a good pruning job as you cut. With forsythia, it's rarely a problem because there are so many branches anyway, but with slower-growing plants, you must be careful not to ruin the shape.

If the fall was warm, some forsythia buds may have already opened. Avoid cutting these by searching for branches with an abundance of fat buds. On most plants, the fat buds are flower buds, and the slender buds produce foliage.

Cut your branches with pruning shears on a warm day, one with a temperature above freezing, and bring them indoors. Cut each to a size you can use in a vase, and then smash the stems, using a hammer on a hard surface, to encourage water to enter the stems easily. Place branches in a bucket of warm water, in a spot that is cool and well-lit but not sunny. Cover the branches overnight with a plastic cleaner's bag to reduce the shock of coming from the damp outdoors into your dry house. Or you can completely immerse the branches overnight in a tub of warm water and then place them in a bucket.

Once they come into bloom, put them into a vase, sit back and enjoy the show. 

—Jane G. Pepper

A “PAINTED” MASTERPIECE

The Perennial Plant Association has named *Athyrium niponicum ‘Pictum’* as its 2004 Perennial Plant of the Year. This low-maintenance Japanese painted fern is one of the showiest ferns for shade gardens, and its hardiness—nearly everywhere in the United States except the desert and northernmost areas in Zone 3—makes it very popular. ‘Pictum’ grows 18 inches tall and, as it multiplies, can form a clump more than 2 feet wide. It produces 12- to 18-inch fronds in a soft shade of metallic silver-gray with hints of red and blue and a wonderful texture, electrifying shady areas of the garden.

This painted fern, which prefers partial to full shade, makes an out-

standing companion plant for a variety of shade-loving perennials. It provides a nice contrast to bleeding heart, columbine, astilbe and coral bells. Another popular combination is Japanese painted fern with hosta, especially *Hosta ‘Patriot’* and ‘Ginko Craig’ or, for something different, *Hosta sieboldiana ‘Elegans’*.

Carex (sedges) are shade-loving, easy-to-grow, grass-like plants that also look great next to Japanese painted ferns. Try *Carex morrowii ‘Variegata’* or *Carex siderosticha ‘Silver Sceptre’*.

Still other excellent combinations are Japanese painted fern with *Tiarella* (foam flower); *Brunnera macrophylla ‘Langtrees’*, ‘Silver Wings’, or ‘Jack Frost’; *Lamium maculatum ‘Orchid Frost’* and ‘Purple Dragon’; *Astilbe ‘Snowdrift’*; *Astilbe ‘Sprite’*; and *Dicentra ‘King of Hearts’*. Use these selections with white flowers or variegated leaves to echo the fern’s colors, or pick other shades for contrast.

HARDINESS: Grows in USDA Hardiness Zones 3-8.

LIGHT: Part to full shade. The best frond color results in light shade.

PLANTING INFORMATION: Japanese painted fern performs best in well-drained, moist soil with added organic compost or peat moss. It flourishes where moisture and humidity abound. 



Outer Spaces

by Diarmuid Gavin

(DK Books,

256 pages, \$30)

If you like high-style designer gardens, you’ll adore *Outer Spaces*. Written by UK designer and popular TV host Diarmuid Gavin, the book documents 28 of his more inspiring projects, which combine horticulture, architecture, sculpture and furnishings. This lavish book is sure to amaze gardeners with its colorful layout and interesting design concepts.

Several of Gavin’s outdoor designs are centered around a small building or space that’s specifically created for garden viewing. These structures often have unusual shapes; rectangles and especially ovals predominate (he seems to have a particular fascination with egg shapes).

Still, this book really has to be seen to be appreciated. In short, it’s an absolute stunner of maverick garden design. You won’t be able to put it down. 

Destination

A Preview of the 2004 Philadelphia Flower Show
and its Renowned "Central Feature" Exhibit

Story by John Gannon



"Come with me
And you'll be,
In a world of
Pure imagination.
Take a look
And you'll see,
Into your
imagination."

(from the song "Pure Imagination," by
Anthony Newley & Leslie Bricusse)

The largest display of specimen orchids in North America...Polynesian dancers...the rarely glimpsed beauty of a lush coral reef in a sea of vibrant blue and green...a walk through a garden of angels. All are elements of the 7,000-square-foot Central Feature exhibit in the 2004 Philadelphia Flower Show, *Destination Paradise*.

"This year's Central Feature is purely imaginary," says Flower Show designer and director Ed Lindemann, commenting on what visitors can expect at the annual gardener's extravaganza at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. "It offers up a fantasy vision of paradise."

Incredibly, the Philadelphia Flower Show celebrates its 175th anniversary this year, having begun in 1829. "We've been reflecting that this is quite an achievement," says PHS president Jane Pepper, in somewhat of an understatement. To commemorate this momentous year, a 14-foot-tall, 10-foot-wide anniversary cake—designed by Jamie Rothstein—will dazzle Show visitors in the main exhibit area, just one of many surprises in store. Let's now take a closer look at the Central Feature.

ORCHIDS GALORE

This year's Central Feature presents three visions of paradise. For the first, "Destination Paradise," picture a lush rainforest, an engaging haven filled with orchids as far as the eye can see, including such tongue-twisters as dendrobiums, phalaenopsis, paphiopedilums, cymbidiums, cattleyas, and phragmipediums. "We believe this will be the largest collection of specimen orchids ever presented in North America," notes Walter Off of Waldor Orchids, the designer of this display. He says that there could be as many as 100,000 blooms in this exhibit alone come showtime.

Indeed, you can find a lush paradise before the Flower Show if you make a trip to the town of Linwood, New Jersey, just south of Atlantic City. There you'll find Walt, his brother Bill, and a talented crew that has enabled Waldor Orchids to grow and adapt throughout its history. Since its beginnings in the 1920s, this family-run business (initially started by Walt's dad, George) has morphed from a corsage and cut-flower shop into one that today deals in nearly all container-grown orchids, the majority of them sold through their wholesale enterprise. (We civilian plant-

Paradise



Bob Wigand

buyers can take advantage of their retail business on Fridays & Saturdays.)

Waldor's involvement with the Philadelphia Flower Show stretches back a generation, and for years they have had a booth in the Show's ever-bustling Marketplace. When president Jane Pepper came to PHS over 20 years ago, she quickly became a fan of George Off. "Walt's father was one of my favorite people, full of integrity and warmth," says Jane. "It's wonderful to see his sons carrying on the tradition."

In Waldor's display, you'll also encounter exotic foliage, the result of a few trips that Walt made to Florida with associate Flower Show designer Sam Lemheney, who joined the PHS staff last year after working at Disney World in Florida. "We were able to tap into Sam's prior experience

Above: Go under the sea with Solana Succulents.

Left & Opposite: Gorgeous blossoms from Waldor Orchids.



DATES

March 7 - 14, 2004

THEME

Destination Paradise

INFORMATION

phone: 215-988-8899

(recorded information)

web site:

www.theflowershow.com**LOCATION**

Pennsylvania Convention Center

12th and Arch Streets

Philadelphia, PA

HOURSSundays, March 7 and 14,
8 am - 6 pmMonday - Friday, March 8 - 12
10 am - 9:30 pmSaturday, March 13
8 am - 9:30 pm**PRODUCED BY****THE PENNSYLVANIA
HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY****TICKETS AT THE DOOR****Adults**

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with Disney to select some outstanding foliage plants for the exhibit," Walt recalls. Walt also takes regular buying trips to Hawaii and California, where he somehow has the discipline to leave his flip-flops at the hotel while visiting as many as 30 nurseries at a pop.

Specimen plants boasting 50 to 150 blooms each—carefully tended for the past four years—will astound Show visitors; they're part of a changing "color-wheel" of orchid meadows that will subtly shift in mood throughout the display. Various features in the exhibit (including a mist-spouting mouth in a carved-stone-face that promises not to be too scary for the kids) provides a steamy, tropical welcome.

An elegant arrangement from Flowers by David.

Courtesy of Flowers by David

DIVE! DIVE! DIVE!

From the Jersey shore, we journey to the West Coast for a visit with Jeff Moore of Solana Succulents, near San Diego. Jeff is the watery wizard behind part two of the Central Feature, "Underwater Paradise." Visitors might want to hold their breath as they pass through this part of the Show, as they'll feel like they're exploring the mysteries of flourishing underwater ocean reefs. "The succulents we're using look like those in the ocean environment," explains Jeff. Many have been hard to acquire, forcing Jeff to go to extreme measures to hide them from his customers in the months leading up to the Show. "I end up having to stash them someplace away from the store—often at my parent's house," he confides.

To add to the illusion, props like fake fish and octopus, rusted anchors and a rowboat floating above the landscape transform the viewer into a diver of the deep. "I found Nemo before Nemo was found," he jokes, referring to how his landscape creations preceded the *Finding Nemo* movie phenomenon.

Perhaps Jeff's expertise in mimicking oceanic horticulture comes from his love of the Pacific. Whenever the waves are good and he can squeeze in some time between work and family, you can usually find him surfing. Last year, Jeff headed east for the first time, helping out with Pat Hammer's topiary cantina exhibit at the 2003 Flower Show.

This year, Jeff will not only arrive a few days early to mount Solana's display, he's also hanging around for a bit during the Flower Show to give lectures on his wondrous world of cacti and succulents. And this time, he'll be prepared for the Northeast's blustery March weather. "I'll be packing my extra long-sleeve t-shirt," he says.

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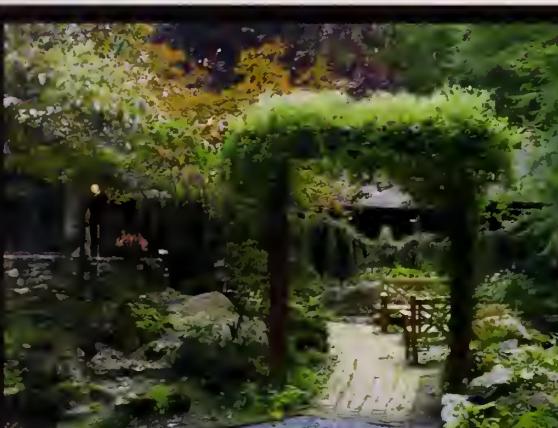
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Above: A view of the popular Horticourt, where specimen plants are displayed.

HEAVEN CAN'T WAIT

Flowers by David, from Langhorne, PA, is charged with the third part of the Central Feature, "This Place Called Paradise," a whimsical look at heaven. "We like to showcase long-time exhibitors," notes Ed Lindemann, "and we thought Flowers by David was ideal for this part of the exhibit." This will be the eighth Flower Show for owners David and Robin Heller, who have been in the florist business for 14 years. "David's the talent," laughs Robin in praise of her husband. "I'm the organization."

"This part of the Central Feature will have a lush, ele-

gant look," Robin explains, adding that it will include beds of graceful lilies, roses and amaryllis. Soft sculptures of angels, each with their own unique personalities, will adorn the installation, along with a wing-making factory for angels-in-waiting. Visitors will also be treated to a glimpse of the "pearly gates" and a stairway to heaven.

Echoing the words of many Flower Show exhibitors, Robin says this forum gives their business a lot of exposure. "We love to have a presence at the Show," she says. You'll find Robin, her husband or someone from Flowers by David on hand to make small talk or answer any questions.

Of course, the Central Feature is just the beginning of the journey at the Philadelphia Flower Show. For home gardeners, there are practical displays of Gold Medal Plants, educational exhibits and plenty of annual and perennial flowers that absolutely thrive in our region. There are also hundreds of entries in the Horticourt and Competitive Class sections, delectable culinary demonstrations, wedding displays, informative horticulture lectures and 140-plus vendors in the Marketplace. In short, there's something to awe and inspire everyone in this world of pure imagination. 

For more information on the 2004 Philadelphia Flower Show, visit our website at www.theflowershow.com or call 215-988-8899. Waldor Orchids can be reached at www.waldor.com or 609-927-4126.

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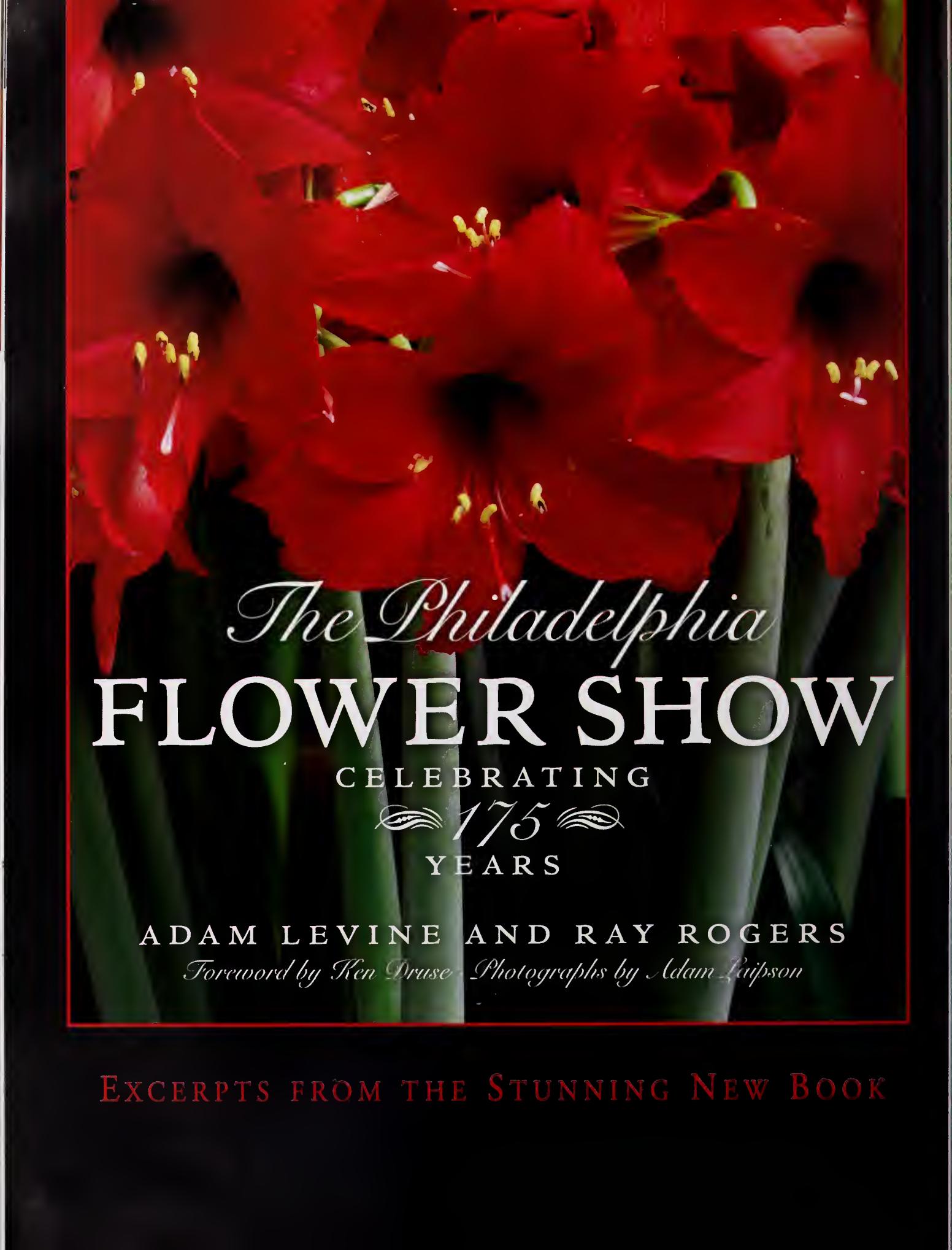
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ADAM LEVINE AND RAY ROGERS

Foreword by Ken Druse *Photographs by Adam Levine*

EXCERPTS FROM THE STUNNING NEW BOOK

T

he Pennsylvania Horticultural Society is proud to announce the publication of *The Philadelphia Flower Show, Celebrating 175 Years* (published by HarperCollins).

This magnificent hardcover book features 282 pages and hundreds of gorgeous photographs. It is the first-ever volume to capture the majesty and spectacular color of this event. The book was written by award-winning garden writer Adam Levine (*Garden Design*, *This Old House*, *Green Scene*) and long-time Flower Show exhibitor Ray Rogers. Also featured are the vivid show photographs of Adam Laipson and an introduction by noted garden-guru Ken Druse. Here are just a few book excerpts from the authors, PHS president Jane G. Pepper and others, along with some equally stunning images.

A LARGE FAMILY

People involved with the Show—staff, exhibitors, sponsors, volunteers—often refer to themselves as a family. We have our agreements and disagreements, but at the end of the day, we are all connected. We are a group brought together by a love of gardening and plants and with the same goal—to produce the very best Show possible for our visitors and to raise funds for Philadelphia Green, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's community greening program. Over the past 30 years, we have carried out more than 3,000 greening projects in Philadelphia, from tiny neighborhood parks to extensive city landscapes.

Truly, the Philadelphia Flower Show family sows seeds each year...that flourish year-round in our city. (Jane G. Pepper)

TRANSFIXED BY PERFECTION

The part of the Show that makes a trip each year more necessary than nice are the amateur horticulture classes. I may come across a perfectly planted *hypertufa* trough, as well as take home a brochure on how to make one myself and install the jewel-like alpine plants I see blooming months before their outdoor counterparts. They are museum-quality examples of their kind.

One or another of these plants transfixes me, and the crowds are usually thinner in the amateur class areas, so I can take uncrowded time to pay my devotion. I'll stare until the perfection of the plant and the dedication of its keeper have been passed on to me.

(Ken Druse, author of *The Passion of Gardening and Making More Plants*)

HERE COME THE VOLUNTEERS!

Of all the people [Show director and designer] Ed Lindemann has worked with over the years, he is most grateful to the Show volunteers. "They're the reason it happens," he says. "There is absolutely no way the Show could go on without them. The time these people put in is phenomenal."

Even after the many years of long hours and ceaseless planning and problem-solving, Ed still gets a thrill from the Show each year: "Nobody on [PHS] staff has seen more productions than I have, and I still get goose bumps when I see it all come together."

Left: Jane Pepper

Below: Ed Lindemann

A HEROIC ACT

Most entrants (in the Competitive Classes) are amateurs who don't compete for monetary gain, but for the challenge of doing one's horticultural best. The depth of the dedication is perhaps epitomized by the heroics (some might say insanity) of Barbara Sullivan, a member of the Martha Washington Garden Club in Yardley, Pennsylvania.

In 2003, Barbara slipped and broke her wrist while loading her car with plants for the club's window box and lamppost exhibit. The entry had to be installed that morning and even though Barbara says her hand was 'hanging like a dead fish,' she refused to leave the space empty and with the help of another club member, she managed to get the job done.





Above: A once-in-a-lifetime wedding at the 1998 Flower Show.

Top left: Laura Philip

Middle left: Joe Cugliotta

Bottom: "Backyard Barbeque," the 1998 Major Exhibit from J. Cugliotta Landscape/Nursery.





A LEGACY IN FLOWERS

Laura Philip has been attending the Flower Show since almost before she can remember. Her mother, Ginnie Tietjens, is a veteran of the arrangement classes, and her father, Kenneth, has made occasional entries as well. At age 14, Laura got in on this family act, entering a medium niche classic with her mother, and the next year she set out on her own.

Now 34, she has missed only one year since then, when her first son, Thomas, was born. "Now that I have two kids and I'm a stay-at-home mom, entering the Show is one creative thing I still do for me," she says.

TEAM EFFORT

The year 1982 marked the beginning of major exhibitor Joe Cugliotta's involvement with the Show when he helped create the backdrop for a friend's floral display. When the friend dropped out the following year, Joe jumped into the void.

"At first I did the Show for business reasons," says Joe, whose landscaping company is based in Southampton, New Jersey. "But over the years, there's a camaraderie that I've developed with the other exhibitors. While being in the Show has absolutely helped my business, at this point in my life, I feel it's a commitment, almost as if I'm part of a team."

WEDDING BELLS

At the Philadelphia Flower Show in the 1920s, Charles Baxter, a local florist, exhibited wedding flowers by staging an actual ceremony, complete with bride and groom

and all attendants. When the ceremony began, everyone in the hall surged toward the display, creating a dangerous crowd-control situation.

However, in 1998, flower arranger Jamie Rothstein and Bill "Buzzy" Rosenberg, who has worked on Show public relations, were married one night after the Show was closed to the public. This one-off Flower Show event took place in front of 300 guests in Jamie's exhibit, a recreation of the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. The next year, on her way to the Show setup, Jamie went into labor and soon after, gave birth to her first child, Joy.

FROM YONDER BALCONY...

When the Balcony class debuted at the Show in 2001, the Planters, a suburban Philadelphia garden club, was among the initial entrants. "That year," says club member Sham Knight, "we chose to do it as a real balcony would look, and we ended up with a third prize." She learned afterward that instead of reality, the judges were looking for luxuriant balconies overstuffed with plants that would be impossible to maintain in real life.

Two years later, overabundance is exactly

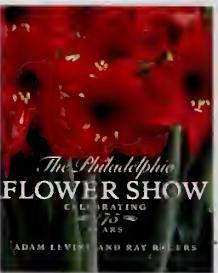
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what Sham and her co-chair, M.L. Riley, provided with the entry *El Baile de las Flores* (The Dance of the Flowers, pictured at left). The committee worked for months on the project, and Sham estimates that the plants alone cost about \$1,000. But all the time paid off when the Planters' over-planted balcony won a red ribbon on Saturday, a blue ribbon on Wednesday, and best of class for the week.

UP FROM THE ASHES

This species of begonia (pictured left bottom) grows naturally in shady mountainous areas of Brazil, where the humidity is high and breezes keep the air fresh. It isn't easy to duplicate, but a carefully maintained greenhouse can come close.

Such were the conditions in the begonia and fern greenhouse at Meadowbrook Farm until a fire broke out in February 2002. Before it was successfully contained, the fire damaged and destroyed many plants. Virginia Page, Meadowbrook's begonia and fern grower, was forced to discard many specimens, but she couldn't bring herself to part with a badly damaged *Begonia soli-mutata* that had been started about six months earlier from a piece of leaf. She cut it back severely and gave it special care, growing it in a very open, peat moss and bark medium, watering it from below, providing specialized fertilizers, giving the plant a quarter turn every day to encourage nicely balanced growth.

Back into the humid and well-ventilated greenhouse, the difficult-to-grow *soli-mutata* thrived. It literally rose from the ashes of the greenhouse fire and won both a blue and a red ribbon at the 2003 Show. 



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Isaiah Berlin invented neither the term "Counter-Enlightenment" nor the concept. However, more than any other figure since the eighteenth century, Berlin appropriated the term and made it the heart of his own political thought. Many of the essays in this volume were prepared for the International Seminar in Memory of Sir Isaiah Berlin, held at the School of History in Tel Aviv University during the academic year 1999-2000.

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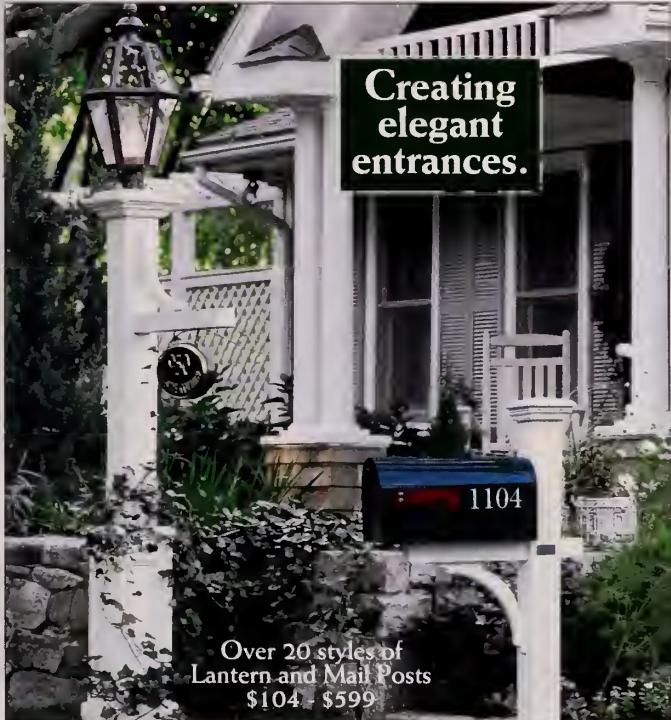
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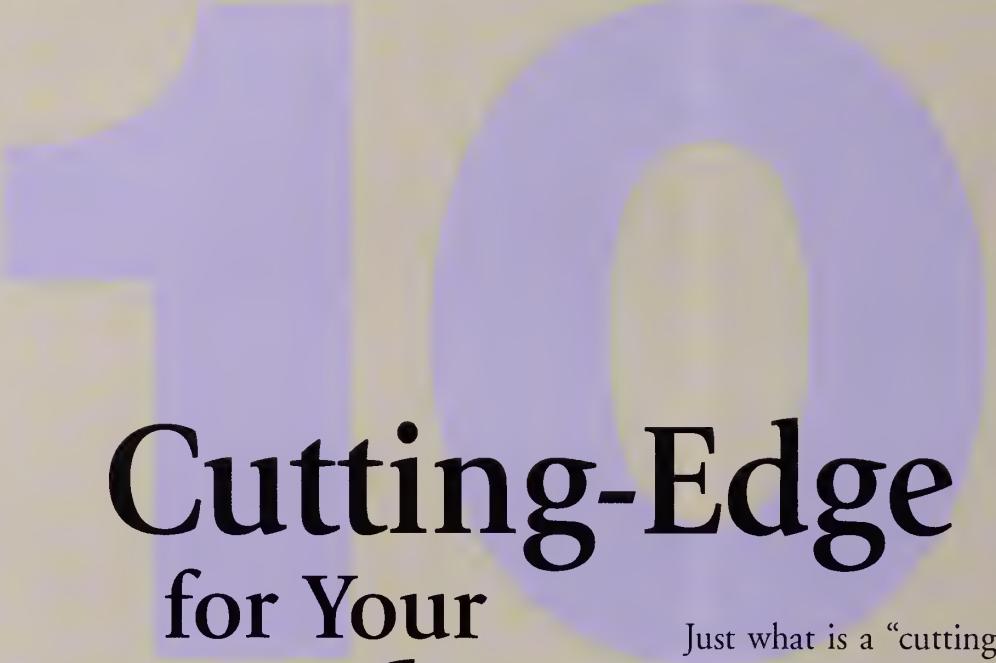
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Cutting-Edge Plants for Your Garden

Story by Patricia A. Taylor

Just what is a “cutting-edge” plant? Here’s my definition: a beautiful plant that provides weeks of interest, requires little maintenance, is pest and disease resistant, and is not well known.

As I was trying to write this article, however, my hunt for these gems turned into a nightmare. There are a lot of great plants out there and I was restricted to 10. After much sighing, I narrowed the list to the following. Presented in alphabetical order by botanical name, they represent a mixture of something old and something new, something readily available and something only offered in small quantities. They are all, however, trend setters and one or more will gladden your heart and your garden in the coming year.

1. ‘White Ball’ Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia* cultivar)

“Oh no, not another butterfly bush,” I said to myself as Tim Wood, product development manager at the wholesale Spring Meadow Nursery in Grand Haven, Michigan, singled out this shrub. While these easy-care plants flower all summer, attract multitudes of butterflies, and are unappetizing to deer, I find them not only ubiquitous but also a blowsy, 5-to-8 foot, tattered presence by the end of summer.

This is not the case with ‘White Ball’. It is a tight, compact mound of silver gray foliage that tops out at 2 to 4 feet. The upright spikes of white flowers that cover the plant and attract

butterflies all summer are sterile. The last is an important attribute as the prolific buddleias are now starting to appear on invasive plant lists in many states.

‘White Ball’ is perfect for a sunny mixed border and will add special grace and charm in a children’s garden. It is slowly starting to make its way into retail garden centers and is also available from Forestfarm and Plant Delights mail-order nurseries.

2. ‘Tangerine Dream’ Pepper (*Capsicum* cultivar)

This multi-tasking plant, introduced as a Burpee exclusive last summer, is a handsome ornamental and a prolific source of sweet peppers. Grace Romero, Burpee’s director of research and product development, made sure I not only admired its good looks but also sampled the sweet crispness of its fruits when I toured the firm’s Fordhook Farms display gardens last September.

‘Tangerine Dream’ is a bush pepper, growing only 18 inches tall and 24 inches wide. That height and spread makes it perfect for containers, the front of ornamental borders, and small vegetable plots. It also ensures that the branches do not break off when weighed down with fruit, as so often happens with taller, longer-branched peppers.

The 2- to 3-inch long peppers, borne in clusters 70

days after the plants are placed outside, appear on top, which further distinguishes ‘Tangerine Dream’ from other peppers. They start as dark green, then acquire yellow tones, and finally ripen as a bright coral red; all three colors appear on the plant at the same time. I sampled the peppers in all three color stages and, while the reds were undoubtedly the sweetest, all were delicious.

Burpee is currently the only source, offering both seeds and plants. Once word of its superb ornamental and taste attributes spreads, however, ‘Tangerine Dream’ should be offered by many other sources as well.



Left: ‘White Ball’ Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia* cultivar)

Above: ‘Tangerine Dream’ Pepper (*Capsicum* cultivar)





Rob Cardillo



Courtesy of Plant Delights Nursery

Top: 'Crème Brûlée' (Coreopsis cultivar)
Bottom: *Dianthus barbatus* 'Heart Attack'

3. 'Crème Brûlée' (*Coreopsis* cultivar)

Think of this 18-inch-tall perennial as a 'Moonbeam' coreopsis on steroids. It's a recommendation of Stephanie Cohen, popularly known as the "supreme goddess of new perennials" and officially designated as the director of the Landscape Arboretum at Temple University's Ambler College campus. Stephanie loves bright bold colors, while I favor more muted tones. 'Crème Brûlée' satisfies both our tastes.

Its flowers are larger, appear longer, and are more pronounced and numerous than those on 'Moonbeam', and the foliage is a darker green. And while not a brassy yellow, the flower color is richer than that on 'Moonbeam' plants. As with 'Moonbeam', however, 'Crème Brûlée' does best in full sun with good drainage.

'Crème Brûlée' made its debut last year and should be more readily available at garden centers this year. Walters Gardens, a large perennial wholesale grower in Michigan, has named it a 2004 Perennial Pick, a designation that encourages retail firms to carry it.

4. Sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus* 'Heart Attack')

Though Sweet William appears to be an "in" plant—the National Garden Bureau has proclaimed 2004 as the Year of the Dianthus—they have traditionally been "out" in my hot, humid central New Jersey garden because they can't last beyond the month of May. I couldn't believe it, then, when I saw four of these plants advertised in plantsman Tony Avent's Plant Delights catalog. After all, central New Jersey is the equivalent of summer heaven compared to Avent's nursery in Raleigh, North Carolina, where scorching summers are the norm.

'Heart Attack' receives first place billing in his listing, however, and for good reasons. It features luscious dark-red spring flowers and glossy deep green leaves that hold throughout the season. And, unlike most Sweet William cultivars, the 12-inch-tall 'Heart Attack' has proven to be a perennial rather than a biennial in the 10 years that Avent has grown it.

5. Caribbean Copper Plant (*Euphorbia cotinifolia*)

I fell in love with this plant last August, when I rounded a corner at Kykuit, the Rockefeller estate in Tarrytown, New York, and saw sunbeams filtering through its warm-toned, plum-purple leaves. It turns out I was a bit late to the admiration party for this tropical, treelike Euphorbia, which has been called a "flawless imitation of the purple-leaved *Cotinus coggygria* 'Rubrifolius'." Both the J. C. Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the National Botanical Garden on the Capital Mall in Washington, DC have featured and praised it over the past several years.

Closer to our region, Joe Kiefer, co-owner of Triple Oaks Nursery in Franklinville, New Jersey, has been selling the plant for three years and just loves it. It tolerates heat and drought but not freezing temperatures. Joe says it's "awesome" in a container and, should you grow it in one, you could bring it inside for winter. This is a hard-to-find plant. In addition to Triple Oaks Nursery, the Singing Springs Nursery mail order firm offers it.

6. 'Summer's Kiss' *Gaillardia* (*G. x grandiflora* cultivar)

Gaillardias—with their bright yellows and reds—are too brassy for me. Thus, when Stephanie Cohen tried to plug the new 'Fanfare' gaillardia with its scarlet and yellow tubular petals, I pressed her for something that was a wee bit less flashy. She obliged by describing 'Summer's Kiss' and I fell in love with it, sight unseen.

Here's how Stephanie convinced me this is definitely a "must-have" plant: "Large soft apricot flowers on strong, 18-inch stems; flowers from June well into fall with deadheading; attracts butterflies; resistant to deer; fast grower."

Finding sources for this sun-loving perennial was difficult. I finally called John Friel, marketing manager at Yoder's, a firm that grows starter plants—known as "plugs"—for wholesale growers. John said that Yoder had held an exclusive on this color-breakthrough gaillardia and did not build up enough vegetatively produced stock until two years ago. Savvy garden centers, those that seek out extraordinary plants, should be carrying it this year. Call around to put your order in now.

John added that he views this terrific bloomer as a "trouble-free, no-brainer plant" and he's sorry that he didn't have film on hand when its flowers, which had started blooming in Yoder's Lancaster, Pennsylvania trial gardens in June, actually peeped through an early snow six months later in December.

7. *Geranium* 'Rozanne'

Introduced at the 2000 Chelsea Flower Show and dubbed the "Geranium of the Millennium" by English plantsman Adrian Bloom, this 8-inch-tall, perennial groundcover is drawing similar raves on this side of the Atlantic. Bruce Blevins, director of glasshouse production and propagation at the New York Botanical Garden, brought it to my attention a year ago when I was researching an article on hardy geraniums. He cited its prolific blue flowers, with white centers, and its long bloom time—from June through frost.

What makes 'Rozanne' truly a must-have for our area of the country is that it appears to be unperturbed by either heat or humidity, a fact borne out at trials at the University of Georgia, where it outperformed all other competitors. After seeing it at Fordhook Farms last September, I immediately obtained some for my borders. At Fordhook, plants were in full sun and open shade. At that time of year, the plants in sun were looking a little tired, while those in open shade looked fresh and beautiful.

'Rozanne' should be readily available at most garden centers and is offered by many mail-order nurseries.

8. *Leptodermis oblanga*

This woefully neglected, sun-loving shrub, collected for the Arnold Arboretum by Ernest Wilson in 1905, has yet to acquire a popular name. Bob Stewart of Arrowhead Alpines calls it a daphne by another name, but one with superior disease resistance. "It's just a stunner," says Nicholas Staddon, director of new plant introductions at Monrovia Nursery, "a compact, 18-inch-tall

Courtesy of Yoder Brothers

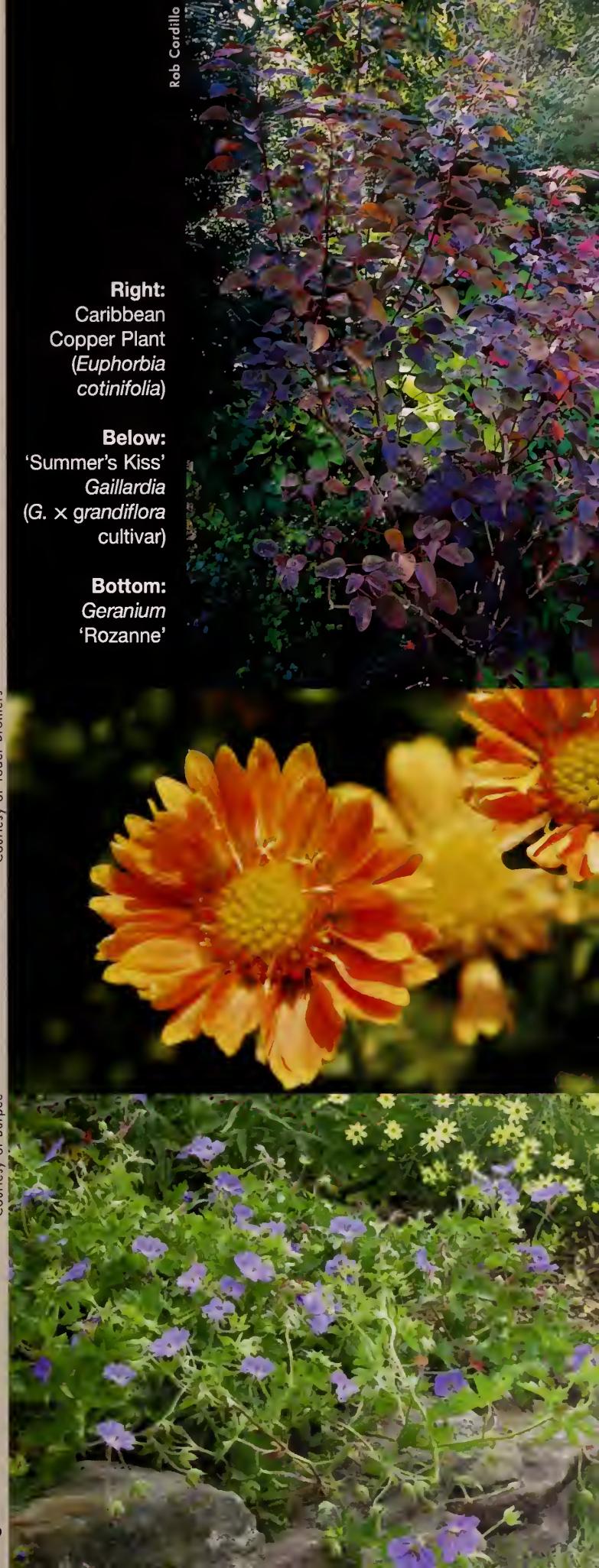
Courtesy of Burpee

Rob Cordillo

Right:
Caribbean
Copper Plant
(*Euphorbia*
cotinifolia)

Below:
'Summer's Kiss'
Gaillardia
(*G. x grandiflora*
cultivar)

Bottom:
Geranium
'Rozanne'





Courtesy of Spring Meadow Nursery

plant festooned with extremely fragrant, pinkish-lilac flowers from late spring to frost." That, by the way, is high praise from a man whose job is to tout new introductions.

Though it is hard to find any reference to this plant in horticultural literature—a fact acknowledged when the Garden Club of America included it in its book, *Plants that Merit Attention: Shrubs* (Timber Press), it is now offered by the wholesale firm Spring Meadow Nursery. That means you can ask your local garden center to track it down for you. In addition, Arrowhead Alpines and Forestfarm mail-order firms offer limited quantities.



Above :
Leptodermis oblonga

Left: Mexican
Hair Grass
(*Nassella*
tenuissima)

Below: Dwarf
Alberta Blue
Spruce (*Picea*
glauca 'Haal')

Patricia A. Taylor



Courtesy of Monrovia

9. Mexican Hair Grass

I put this beautiful, 2-foot-tall grass on my must-have list when Panayoti Kelaidis, curator of plants, singled it out when giving me a tour of the Denver Botanic Gardens last summer. There, its silky, needlelike foliage and feathery flowers formed a sensuous, living sculpture as a hot summer breeze slowly passed by.

Mexican hair grass is classified as *Nassella tenuissima* but sometimes sold under its previous botanical name of *Stipa tenuissima*. It appears that my possessive reaction was not unique. "As soon as people see this graceful, elegant grass, it goes right out the door," says Joe Kiefer of Triple Oaks. Grace Romero of Burpee says its seeds heads are so soft and fluffy that you want to bend down and pet them.

Just give it full sun and excellent drainage and you will be rewarded with lime-green tones that age to a magnificent golden straw color. This grass is wonderful in flower arrangements, both fresh and dried.

Mexican hair grass is offered by many wholesale nurseries and a good garden center should be able to obtain it for you.

10. Dwarf Alberta Blue Spruce (*Picea glauca* 'Haal')

I've only seen pictures of this Monrovia Nursery exclusive, which is being introduced this spring, and they are wonderful. Monrovia's Nicholas Staddon told me that these pictures do not lie.

Discovered as a sport by an English nurseryman, 'Haal' is "the bluest of the blues," Nicholas says. And it holds its blue tones throughout the year, earning the right to be called the first truly stable, blue-needed dwarf Alberta spruce. Easily handling our summer heat and humidity, it features a conical form that remains tight and compact and grows very slowly. At maturity, it tops out at 5 to 7 feet with a spread of 18 to 24 inches.

With all plants vegetatively produced from the one chance discovery, it has taken years to build up quantities of this striking conifer. Monrovia only sells its products through independent garden centers, so if you are keen to obtain this plant, locate this type of retail firm and put your order in now.

So there you have it—10 absolutely superb, "cutting-edge" plants. And, given the length of this article, I now acknowledge that it's a good thing I was limited to just 10. 

Patricia A. Taylor is a frequent contributor to *Green Scene* and *The New York Times*, as well as an annual lecturer at the Philadelphia Flower Show.

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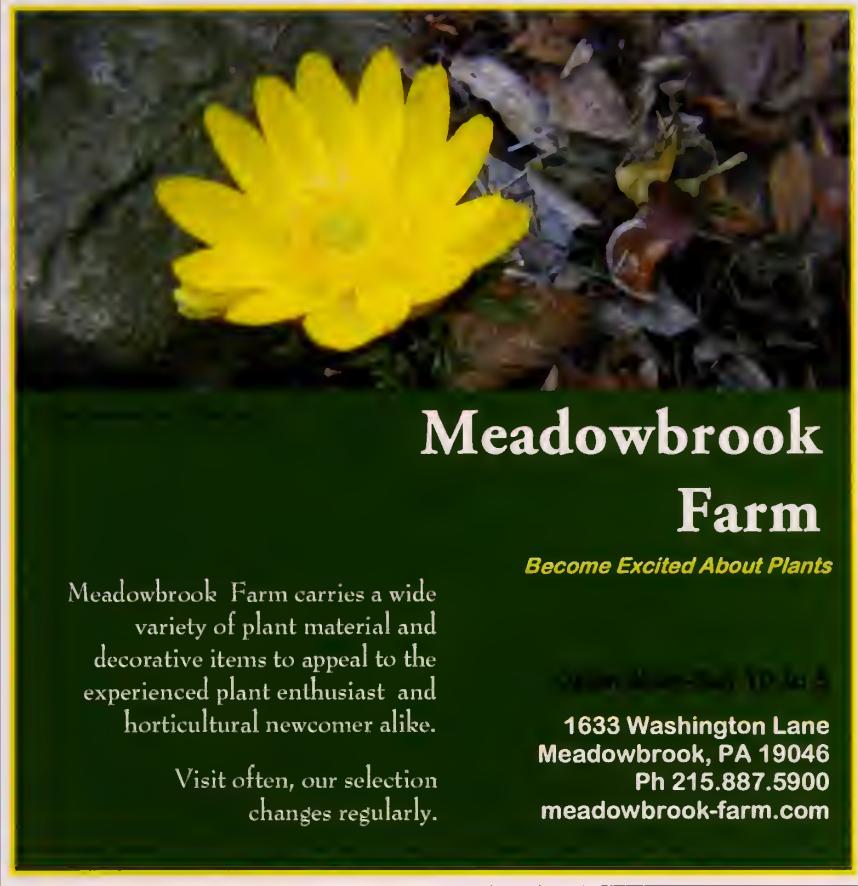
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A Sculptor in the Garden

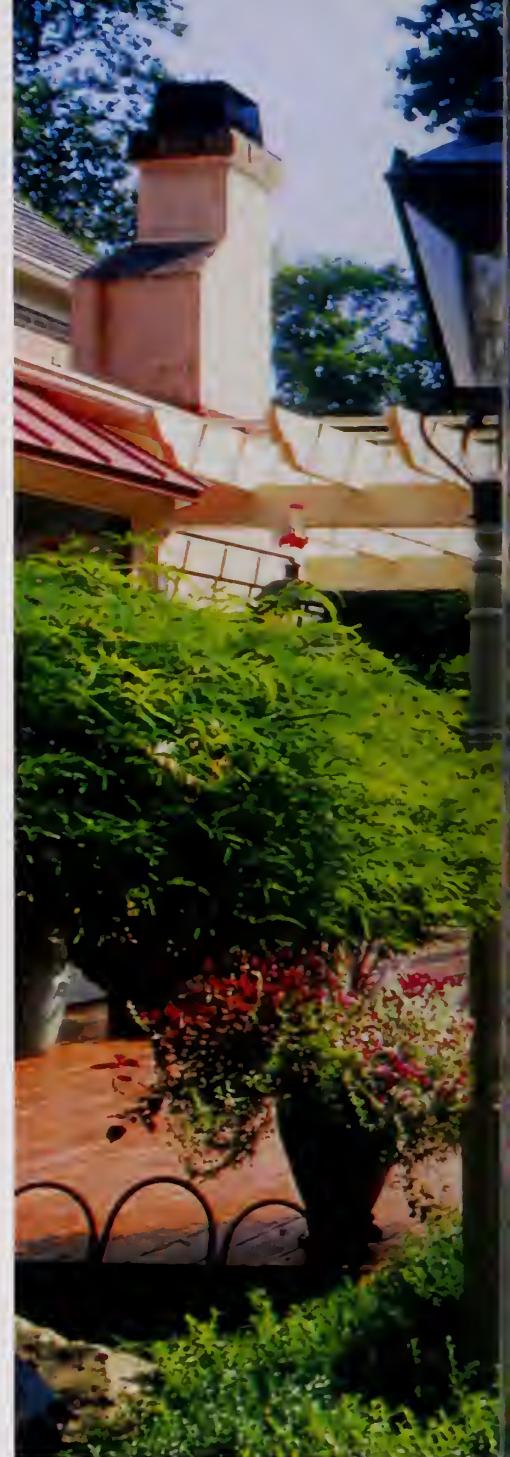
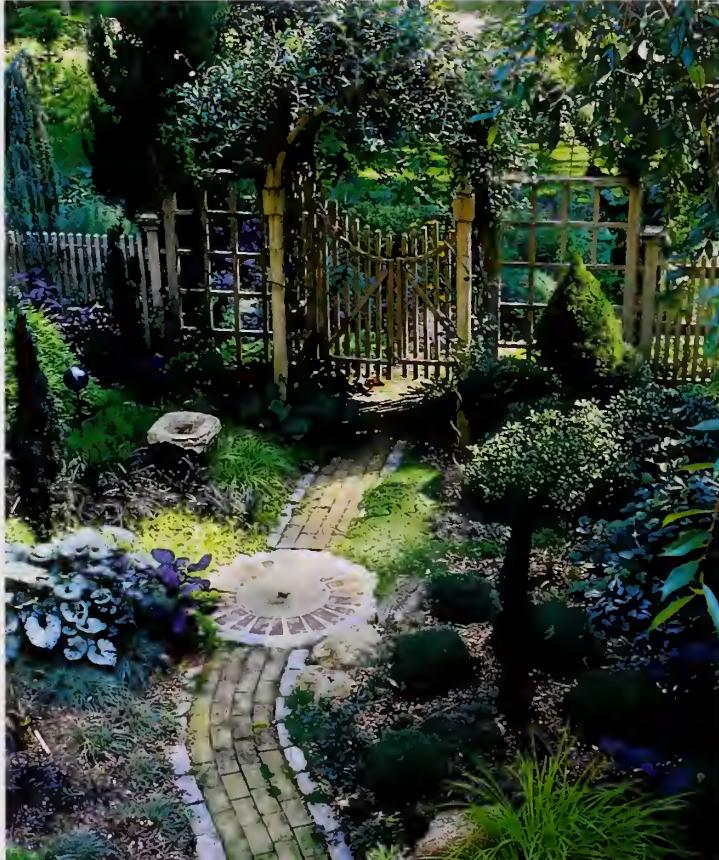
A Visit to Inta Krombolz's Paradise

Story by Ilene Sternberg
Photography by John Gannon



"My neighbor has the most glorious piles of manure," says Inta Krombolz, revealing her secret for growing exceptionally huge and healthy elephant ears (taro plants, that is). Gardeners have a peculiar perspective on the world, don't they?

Inta's artistic sensibility is evident in this bird's-eye view.



Brandy, an energetic chocolate labrador retriever, weaves between and around visitors' legs, hoping for a playmate, as they check out Krombolz's garden, an ever-changing 3-1/2-acre wonderland that Inta began working on 25 years ago when she and husband Skip built their home in West Chester, PA. The garden is planted with not only her collection of choice plants, but also her elegant iron sculptures, most of which are rarely permanent and are often up for grabs to her ever-increasing clientele.

The plantings are a moveable feast, too.



"I'm forever correcting and perfecting, changing things around for textural interest and contrast, but a lot of what I do is spontaneous." Having an artistic eye helps, of course.

"I like designing," says Krombolz. "We all have the same plants, more or less, living here in the same part of the country. What's interesting is to see what combinations people come up with for siting those plants. I like subtle colors, not jarring combinations, and complementary colors—nothing garish. I like 'color

echoes,' repeating the same colors in different textures," she says.

Her sculptures, graceful creations with organic motifs—flowers, trees, birds and other nature forms—integrating very inorganic machine parts, not only serve as unique garden enhancements, but also as functional archways, plant armatures, and supports, birdbaths or feeders, even defensive cage-like structures to foil the ever-present deer that visit.

Krombolz's sculpture career began one day when she stopped at the barn of an eld-

erly Amish farmer-turned-welder in Lancaster County, who used his skills to repair his neighbors' farm equipment. Inta had an idea in mind for a garden ornament and designed and helped direct its creation. After a number of other projects, her mentor encouraged her to learn to weld herself, leading to a reversal of roles. Eventually Inta was doing the work and former instructor was the helper, holding the pieces as Inta devised and assembled. "It's labor intensive, physically taxing work, especially these heavy, unwieldy pieces, but

A Sculptor in the Garden

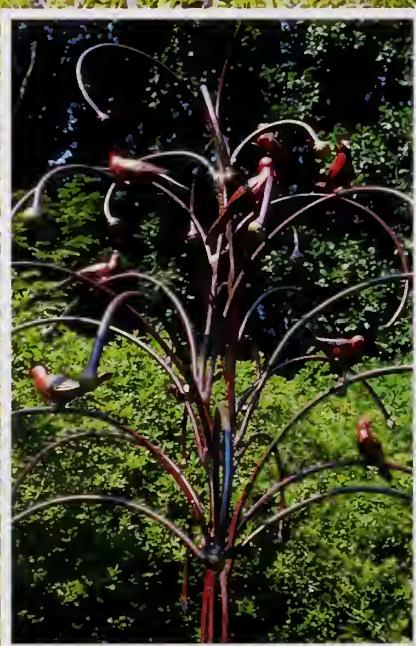
I love to do it." About four years ago, Inta reluctantly retired from a job she also loved, teaching English as a second language, to devote more time to her garden and art.

Although she has her own studio and equipment now, when working on enormous pieces, she occasionally returns to the Amish countryside to cut, bend and, more often, to buy materials. "The atmosphere of working in that barn really appeals to me. The back-to-basics, simple, uncomplicated lifestyle that harkens back to another time offers me an 'other-worldly' environment that is an awesome opportunity few people experience. I realize how lucky I am—It's really so fulfilling."

Once inside her workshop—itself a picturesque structure with rustic rocking chairs on the porch—the accoutrements of her craft give notice that Inta Krombolz is no wimpy lady. Protective clothing—fire-proof suit with long sleeves, leather apron, boots, and gauntlets that she wears to handle red hot pieces of metal and fend off sparks from the grinding tools and welder, the iron bender, the chop saw—are not the gear of some delicate flower of a person. Juxtaposed side-by-side on the studio wall, her union-issue welder's helmet and tea-party-worthy garden hat present a fitting metaphor for her approach to gardening, as well as her personality.

Mother Nature offers up new opportunities all the time, and Krombolz might just be the poster gal for making lemonade out of such sour situations. After one of the 100-foot tulip poplars that border her home crashed down on a garden bed rimmed with cheerful, low-growing *Hosta 'Kabitan'* and filled with choice shrubs and minor spring bulbs, Inta seized upon the chance to renovate the bed. A mossy grinding stone now leans on a boulder in the new bed, along with a sculpture inspired by her admiration for the work of glass artist Dale Chihuly also finds a home there.

With the help of her husband and son, Krombolz hand-digs the pond, stream, and channels that meander through mature oak, ash, and beech trees in a natural runoff area fed by underground springs on a low-





Opposite page: A sweeping bed of hostas in bloom leads up to the house.

Opposite page Inset: One of Inta's avian sculptures.

Above: Inta's sculpture studio sits in a picturesque wooded setting surrounded by lush shade plantings.

lying side of her garden. Others might wring their hands over that soggy, shady site filled with underbrush, brambles, and weedy shrubs and vines, but after methodically clearing out the mess, this resourceful gardener takes advantage of the natural irrigation to grow moisture-loving shade plants. She plunks down a wonderful old potting shed at one end, an aptly named *Lilium superbum* (turkscap lily), a few other desirable lovelies, and a magnificent ornate arch of her own making.

Three little bronze piggies wallow under a Japanese maple by the back deck of her house, and a curious bonded-marble rabbit peeks his head out from among the little boxwoods below. Turns out this charming vignette results from another misfortune. Inta says, "Poor bunny! I couldn't bear to throw him out just because his butt was broken."

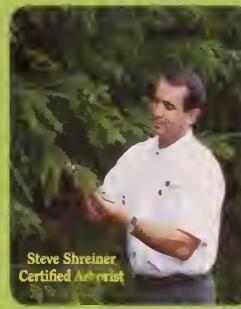
Recently, as part of the continual evolution of the property, the deck was expanded to allow a panoramic view of the garden. Family and friends spend many a contented hour up there (although it's hard to picture Inta lounging for any length of time).



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A Sculptor in the Garden

Flanking the stairs of the deck is a brick pond hosting goldfish, which is frequented by Wally, their fluffy rag-doll cat who likes to drink from the bubbler when he can reach it.

Below is a cozy little courtyard tucked at the side of the house. This enclosed sitting area is a charming departure from the stately trees and expanse of the vista glimpsed through the archways. Vine-covered walls and a quiet fountain set the tone. Diminutive groundcovers underlie small shrubs and other scaled-down plants. A visitor commented, "There's texture all the way down to your feet!"

Just outside lies a major border, with a good-sized *Acer griseum* (paperbark maple), one of PHS's Gold Medal Plants. She must have rubbed it with Alpha-hydroxy skin cream, because the red bark was peeling off in huge curls. In spring this tree is surrounded by alliums (*Allium giganteum* 'Globemaster') and variegated lunaria (*Lunaria annua* 'Variegata'). Further down is a lion's mane maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Shishigashira'), two wedding-cake dogwoods (*Cornus alternifolia* 'Argentea'), an ornamental dwarf peach (*Prunus persica* 'Bonfire') and numerous unusual shrubs, perennials, annuals, and bulbs. Never a dull moment in Inta's garden; there's something noteworthy in any season.

Not long ago, along the circular driveway, Krombolz revamped the front garden adjacent to the house to suggest a city garden behind a wrought iron fence, with miniature hostas, boxwoods, a small enkianthus, some other young additions, and room for whatever next strikes her fancy.

As if grooming her acreage, creating garden art, and the usual activities of living weren't enough to keep her busy, when not working at home, Inta flies to Florida and works just as diligently on her daughter's garden. Alas, all airlines seem to ban bringing that glorious Pennsylvania manure on board. 

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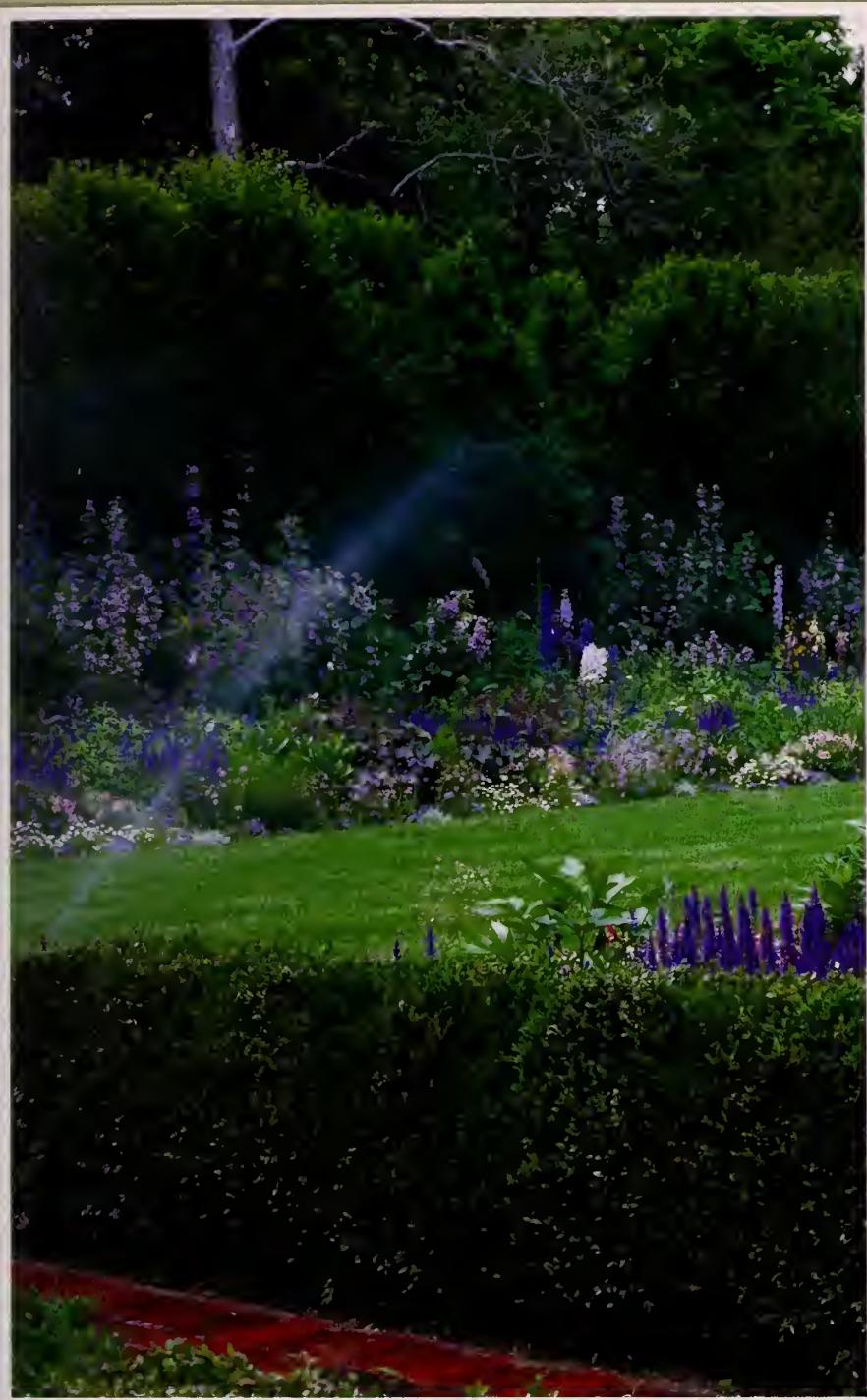
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BY NANCY J. ONDRA.



Photos by Nancy Ondra

When it comes to anything-but-green foliage, silver is by far the most mainstream offering out there, and with good reason: Silver leaves make a lovely complement to just about any companion. But beyond being simply pretty, silver foliage can serve a practical function, too, as a sign of where the plant would best like to grow.

STUNNING IN SUN

Most of the common silver plants that come to mind—artemisias, sages, lavenders, and the like—tend to shine in sites with excellent drainage and lots of sun, and that's no coincidence. Over time,

they have evolved to deal with hot, dry climates by covering their green leaves with tiny hairs. These hairs protect the foliage from intense sunlight and help block drying winds, thereby reducing moisture loss through the leaf pores. The length, thickness, and density of these hairs influence how silvery a leaf appears.

Knowing *why* silvery plants are the way they are will help you decide where to put them in your garden. While some can tolerate evenly moist soil during the growing season, most do best where the soil is on the dry side, especially in wintertime. Sloping sites are particularly good for many silver-leaved plants, since there's little chance of the soil ever getting soggy

there. Full sun is pretty much a must, too. In shady sites, moisture tends to cling to the leaf hairs, providing perfect conditions for rots and other disease problems.



In beds, borders, and containers, silver foliage is an elegant partner for pastel flowers and simply striking when paired with bright blooms. Silver is especially useful as a companion for "difficult" colors, such as the hot-pink flowers of 'Knock Out' roses or the purplish pink spikes of blazing stars (*Liatris*). Bright silvers are beautiful with blue leaves and dramatic with dark foliage; with chartreuse, it creates an edgy effect that may or may not be to your taste.

Perhaps the very best use of silver foliage, though, is with white flowers. These pale beauties will pick up even the faintest bit of light, making them a must-have for any evening garden. Lining a path or walkway with silver leaves is another great idea. Besides clearly marking the way, many silvery plants have aromatic foliage, so you can enjoy their scents as well as their color while you stroll.

MADE FOR THE SHADE

Now, what about lungworts (*Pulmonaria*), lamiums, hardy cyclamen, and other silvery, shade-loving beauties? No, they're not simply exceptions to the "sun and dry" rule; they are in a class by themselves. Their coloration is not due to hairs, but rather to blisters or air pockets just below the leaf surface, which reflect light and produce the silvery appearance. This can occur between the leaf veins, along the veins, or at random, producing a variety of silvery patterns.

In all, shade-loving silvers are super for brightening up dark, dreary areas, and like their sun-loving counterparts, they're especially effective for outlining pathways to make edges easier to see.

Top left: *Cornus stolonifera* 'Sunshine' and dusty miller (*Senecio*).

Left: *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle' and *Geranium sanguineum*.

Nancy J. Ondra is a freelance garden writer who lives in Bucks County, PA. She has written several books including *Grasses: Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design* (Saxon Holt Pub.)



• BY MARILYN ROMENESKO

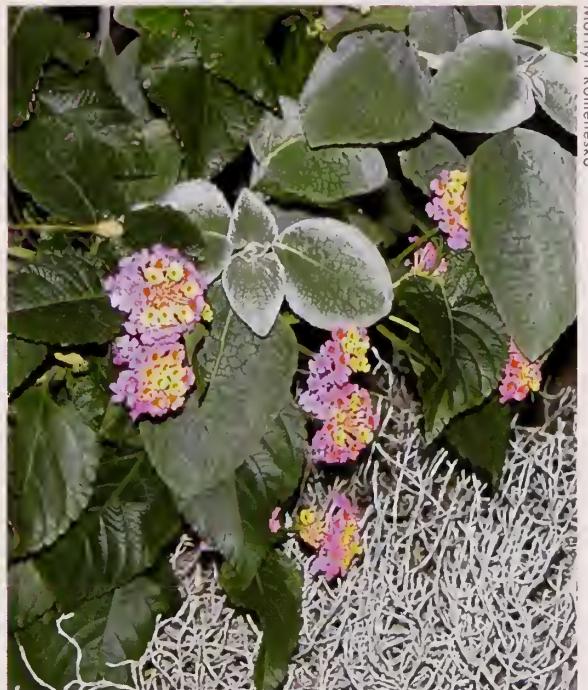
Tantalizing Trailers

At the PHS headquarters at 20th & Arch Streets, the planters last year contained two interesting and underused annuals: cape leadwort (*Plumbago auriculata*) and barbed-wire plant (*Leucophyta brownii*). The former has exquisite light blue or phlox-like flower clusters, while the latter has wiry silver stems and foliage. Both are wonderful trailing plants for containers and can also be used as bedding plants.

A member of the PLUMBAGINACEAE family, cape leadwort is native to South Africa. In the United States, it's hardy in Zones 8 through 11, where it is an evergreen shrub that grows in a rounded mound to 5 feet high and 7 feet wide. Gardeners in our area can grow it as an annual that blooms profusely from July into November and attains a height of 2 feet and a spread of 4 feet in a single season. It can also be brought indoors, overwintered as a houseplant and cut back in late winter to encourage new growth for the coming season.

Cape leadwort prefers evenly moist, loamy, well-drained soil, but it will tolerate some dryness. Though you can easily grow it from seed, it generally will not flower until the second year, so it is best to purchase plants grown from cuttings. For best performance, place it in full-sun to part-shade. The flowers are a true light blue and are clustered together in a spike-like raceme, which looks much like that of garden phlox. There are various shades of light to dark blue and white-flowered forms, but light blue is most readily available in our area.

The barbed-wire plant or cushion bush (*Leucophyta brownii*)—a member of the COMPOSITACEA family—made another interesting addition to our containers last year. Its common name does not do justice to this diminutive trailer, with its wiry, silver, hair-like foliage carried on multi-branched stems. In our area, it grows to 12 inches high by 18 inches wide. In its native Australia, this plant can reach a size of 3 feet high by 3 feet wide under ideal conditions. It favors that continent's windy seaside locations in the equivalent of our Zone 9,



Left: The silver wiry stems of Cushion bush (*Leucophyta brownii*), mixed with lantana and *Plectranthus argentatus*

Below: Cape leadwort (*Plumbago auriculata*)



where it is a perennial. In its native habitat it produces yellow button-like flowers in spring and summer. Here, it does not bloom during the first year of growth.

This plant is a great complement to almost any other plant, especially in containers or rock gardens. In the Delaware Valley, cushion bush prefers full sun, good air circulation, and hot, dry conditions. It is a great plant for seaside gardens, because it tolerates salt spray and wind, as well as temperatures down to 25° F.

Versatile, tough and unusual, these tantalizing trailers deserve a place in your garden, border or container this season. 

A project manager for PHS's Philadelphia Green program, Marilyn Romenesko is a trained horticulturist and ISA-certified arborist. She gardens avidly in Wilmington, Delaware.



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Pete Prown, Editor

Classifieds

The assignment for this intrepid reporter? Cover a landscape crew of the innovative homeless-to-work program called Ready, Willing & Able. So, after arriving on site one wind-swept afternoon in late October, I discovered an immaculately clean and mowed sweep of land and...no crew. Nowhere to be seen. *Gone.* "That's strange," said their community affairs coordinator, Kate Houstoun, over the phone. "They should be there."

It turns out that they were ahead of schedule and already on to their next assignment by the time I arrived. Finally, I caught up with the crew the next morning as they mowed, weed-whacked and removed trash from a mammoth green lot at American & Diamond Streets in North Philadelphia, one of 58 landscaped sites in the federally supported American Street Empowerment Zone. ("You were too quick for me," I told them.) It's almost hard to recall that these same lush green spaces were once weed-infested, debris-choked monstrosities just a few years ago, before PHS's Philadelphia Green got involved in their turnaround.

In spring 2003, as part of the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone's vacant land program, Philadelphia Green hired Ready, Willing & Able (RWA) to maintain these lots. A program of the New York-based non-profit Doe Fund, RWA provides an environment where homeless individuals who are "ready, willing and able" to work and keep to a clean lifestyle can learn valuable life and job skills, with the eventual goal of securing full-time work and their own housing. Program participants are paid for their day jobs, live and dine together at the RWA facility, and have access to a computer lab and job-skills classes; they usually remain in the program for about a year. Two years ago, the Doe Fund opened up a division of Ready, Willing & Able in Philadelphia.



Though this landscape crew is now a finely tuned "green-machine," there were a few hurdles to overcome. A hold-up in the funding stream delayed the start of work. Add to that the extremely rainy spring, *really* high grass, and lots of trash that had accumulated on the sites over the winter. In addition, landscape maintenance was a new frontier for a program with a background mostly in street and park cleanup.

"They really started with no experience in maintaining vacant lots," reflected Philadelphia Green's Margaret Funderburg. "But they were very motivated, and they wanted to succeed." Reflecting on the tough start, RWA supervisor Javier Rivera recalled, "At first, we stepped in with just one foot, but we soon realized that we had to jump in with both!" To help them succeed, Philadelphia Green brought in Phil McCullough and Burke Brothers' Kevin Burke, private contractors who gave demonstrations on using and maintaining the landscape equipment and advised

the RWA supervisors on leading a landscaping team.

And so, what began as a slow start has assuredly steamrolled into cool efficiency for this hard-working crew, the result of a lot of learning, problem solving and determination. "They strive for a high level of professionalism," said Margaret. Javier attributes their leaps and bounds to simple tenacity. "There was always a willingness to get things done."

"This demonstrates that a landscape maintenance program can be run efficiently and cost-effectively," said Philadelphia Green associate director Maitreyi Roy, adding that this will serve as a model for how maintenance programs could be run across the city.

The work has, of course, had an impact on the program participants of Ready, Willing & Able. "The guys are acquiring valuable job skills and assembling great material for their resumes," says Kate. Their work is also a point of pride. "When the guys look back at a lot they've just mowed and cleaned," noted supervisor Dave Nugent, "They get a real sense of accomplishment." Better still, Ready, Willing & Able also often hires from within. In talking with the crew's supervisors, I learned that they were in fact graduates—"products of the program."

Taking a last look at this clean, gleaming stretch of land along American Street, with the crew already packing up their trucks to move on to the next site, you can tell these men are serious about their work. Maybe next time I'll be able to keep up with them.

by John Gannon

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12 To Yearn for Urns

Perhaps you're enthused by container gardening, but you can never quite seem to get things the way you like. Or maybe this is a new horticultural frontier and you'd like a little guidance. Either way, Janet Bly has got plenty to say on container plantings—like following your creative muse, working with color combinations, and suggesting where to place containers and how to work with textures and forms.

18 The Collector

Where can you find a garden of 300 daylilies where no two are alike? How about generous offerings of hellebores, arisaemas, and epimediums? Throw in a myriad of PHS Gold Medal Award-winning trees and shrubs, an “invisible” pool, and other flowering features too numerous to mention, and you have the perfect plant collector's garden that all can enjoy. Landscape architect Linda Corson pays a visit to this haven of Carol McEconomy.

24 Suburban Secrets

Throughout the greater Philadelphia region, there are wonderful public gardens—from landscaped train stations and verdant main streets to thoughtfully tended parks and other public spaces. But who are the unsung heroes behind these lush plantings? John Gannon went to the ‘burbs to find a few of these gardeners and returned with an inspirational tale.

28 A Passion for Vegetables

Though Jim and Estella Bradley are retired, they are anything but idle, as illustrated by the harvested bounties from their vegetable garden. Writer Adam Levine paints a portrait of the Bradley's year in the garden, including how they create a “plan of attack” in winter, grow organic crops and employ conservation in all forms. He even uncovers some tasty recipes straight out of their garden.

COLUMNS

34 Foliage Matters: *A Confederacy of the Blue and the Gray*

By Nancy J. Ondra

35 Cutting-Edge Annuals: *Fragrant Plants*

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover photo by Rob Cardillo. Container arrangement by David Culp.

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Like a lot of folks, I consider the Philadelphia Flower Show the *de facto* kick-off to spring. Usually a trip or two through the Horticourt to witness the amazing specimen plants and a stroll around the Marketplace are all that it takes to kick-start my gardening engine following a long, cold winter.

Fired up by the Flower Show, we like to frame each year's April edition of *Green Scene* as "spring startup issue" and I hope we've succeeded this year. In the Potting Shed section, you'll notice a piece on candelabra primroses, which I had never seen so vividly before visiting Mt. Cuba in Delaware a few years back. Going to this famed private estate in May is a treat in itself, but one small pond at the bottom of the wooded property is ringed with dozens, if not hundreds, of *Primula japonica*, and, for me, it was one of those garden epiphanies that will last a lifetime. If you've never been to Mt. Cuba in the spring, take this one little word of advice: "Go!" (See the article for visitor information.)

There are other articles in here that I hope will invigorate your gardening senses, too. For the ornamental crowd, we visit the garden of Carol McEconomy, PHS member and frequent volunteer. I've been hearing about her grand display of daylilies for a few years, and a visit there last July did not disappoint. Carol grows lots of other perennials, but the daylily show is a stunner and serves as more proof why this durable and attractive plant is one of the mainstays of the Mid-Atlantic summer garden. (Better still, April and early May is a fine time to plant them.)

On a smaller scale, you can read about container gardening, a topic many people can't seem to get enough of. Whenever we survey people about the kinds of gardening stories they'd like to see in *Green Scene*, container gardening often tops the list, and there's little wonder why. With today's high-paced lifestyles, impending deadlines, and the constant demands of family, it's often all we can

do to toss some soil and impatiens into a pot each spring and hope for the best. Fortunately, it doesn't take much more skill than that to create stylish container plantings. A few general rules are all you need, as this effective "how to" piece illustrates.

One story in this issue that I'm fond of is about that increasing rarity, the large-scale vegetable garden. For Estella and Jim Bradley, growing vegetables is a veritable way of life. From seed-starting to sowing to harvesting throughout the summer, fall and winter, the Bradley's lifestyle revolves around their extensive vegetable plot and the vast riches it brings them. This story is an inspiration.

Another uplifting piece tells the story of suburbanites who band together for community-gardening projects. Be it a sidewalk planting, a spruced-up train stop or other public space, these group efforts can really transform the places we live in and improve our quality of life. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society celebrates these activities each year through its Suburban Greening Award and, here, you can read about a few great gardeners and also how to get your collective achievements recognized by PHS.

Spring is also a busy time at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, with lots of workshops, classes, garden visits and events to participate in. To learn more, visit our website at www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org and click on "Calendar." It's sure to help kick-start your spring gardening engine.



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Jennifer Reynolds

Night Lights

My husband and I enjoy dining *al fresco*, but not in the dark. After tiki torches lost their charm and a thousand points of sputtering candlelight failed to pierce the night, we knew we needed professional help. Inspired by Stoney Bank Nursery's Rose Valley garden exhibit at the 2003 Philadelphia Flower Show, we called Glen Blandy of West Chester's Creative Visual Environments, who designed the lighting elements of the blue-ribbon winner.

Blandy, a landscape-lighting designer for 15 years, came to our home with a large variety of fixtures in the back of his van. We were immediately drawn to a floral bronze style that seemed Arts-and-Crafts-y and appropriate to our stone-walled

garden. Like a good architect, Blandy asked how we used the outdoor space, what we hoped to accomplish with extra illumination (stop tripping over tree roots, be able to see our plates, chase a bit of the darkness away) and which areas we felt needed lighting. He also made tactful suggestions of his own. One of his bright ideas involved bolting a downward-pointing light to an ash tree above the grill, thus freeing the cook from juggling flashlight and fork.

Musing on the noticeable jump in outdoor lighting over the last five years, Blandy says, "There are various reasons for the increased popularity of landscape lighting, including the affluence of our area and a desire for safety and security. Many people have made the choice to spend more time at home instead of traveling, while others may leave for work and/or return home in the dark. Whatever the motivation, by brightening their environment, they're enhancing their investment."

According to Jeremy Sviben, lead designer of Medford Lakes' Botanical Lighting Trends in New Jersey, "My biggest challenge is finding people who appreciate tasteful outdoor lighting and have the budget to accomplish it." Abhoring all-wash or colored "Las Vegas" lighting, he says, "I prefer to create effects by reflecting light with a mix of wash lights, uplighting, and backlighting, or by focusing on highlights of the garden. For instance, a client once requested that we highlight a Chinese scholar tree (*Sophora japonica*) for its late-summer bloom."

When visible from the inside, outdoor lighting does double-duty.



Outside, beyond illuminating summer cookouts, it dramatizes skeletal trees in the autumn and creates, Sviben notes, "a work of art on snow or ice." Properly planned and installed, landscape lighting not only adds beauty to the lawn and garden, but also works hard all year round. 

—Jennifer Reynolds

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The Vernal Charm of *Primula japonica*

During the first week of May, Japanese candelabra primroses (*Primula japonica*, or "Kurinsou" in Japanese) fringe the upper pond at the Mt. Cuba Center in Greenville, Delaware (see photo bottom left). From fresh green basal leaves, 1-to 3-foot stems arise, bearing flowers horizontally in 2 to 6 tiers of 8 to 12 flowers each. Tight buds magically stretch until there are several whorls blooming, budding, or setting seed at any given time, prolonging the display over a period of weeks.

Given partial shade and consistently

moist, acidic soil rich in organic matter, these plants self-sow and colonize. Their seed is fine as dust, so don't sneeze where you don't want them to settle. Streamside, bog, or damp borders in dappled shade are amenable sites in Zones 5 (possibly 4) through 7.

Colors vary from red to rose, pink, white and magenta. 'Miller's Crimson' and 'Postford White' are two choice selections. There are other candelabras, but *P. japonica* was the first introduced to the West, and the easiest to grow. Robert Fortune sent seeds and plants from Japan beginning in 1861. Others, such as *P. burmanica*, *P. pulverulenta*, *P. beesiana*, *P. bulleyana*, and *P. x bullesiana*, a cross between the last two, came later. Promiscuous interbreeding begat dazzling shades of peach, plum, ruby, pink, melon, and buttery yellow. You can see many examples in Winterthur's Quarry Garden.

"The foliage stays green well into December, then begins to decompose," says Marcie Weigelt, pond gardener at Mt. Cuba. "Then I lightly mulch the area." Garden writer Ken Druse also suggests not covering the crowns because they shoot out new leaves in early spring. That's when to divide and transplant them at 8 to 12 inches apart. Yellow stippling or browning of leaves suggests spi-



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der mite infestation. Spray regularly with water to drown the little suckers.

Ferns, hostas, Japanese iris, forget-me-nots, and other moisture lovers make compatible neighbors (but avoid bullies such as skunk cabbage, which may overpower them). Once you've seen a thriving community of *Primula japonica* blooming at water's edge, spring will never be the same. 

— Ilene Sternberg

The Mt. Cuba Center is open for tours in the spring. To schedule a tour, call 302-239-4244.



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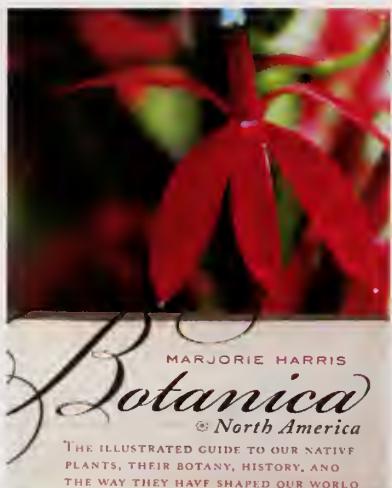
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by Marjorie Harrie
(Harper Collins, 665 pages,
\$59.95)

This large, colorful encyclopedia documents, in a very novel way, 420 plants and trees that are native to North America. Yes, it provides all sorts of botanical information about continental natives, but it also rounds out each entry with interesting historical anecdotes and bits of folklore.

For example, do you know how trilliums migrate around the forest? They are able to reproduce because ants remove their seeds, which also contain a capsule of oil they like to eat. So the ant brings the seed back to their nests, devours the oil sack, and then leaves the untouched seed on the ground...to sprout anew. (Very clever, those trilliums.) And this is but one of the thousands of wonderful little tales to be found here.

While this large volume isn't for everyone, I can see serious gardeners

Mailbox



The article old "Winter Wonderland" (December issue) gave me some good ideas for natural decorating around the holidays. I would like to offer a refinement to the caption for the photograph on page 15, in case anyone wants to replicate the arrangement display. It should read, "Variegated English holly, Oregon grape-holly, and cone-laden Douglas fir boughs."

Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) cones are unique with their ragged appearance and cinnamon color. While "pinecone" may be acceptable terminology for the lay person, distinctions should be made by the horticulturist among pine, spruce, fir, Douglas fir, hemlock, and other cones. Even among the cones from pine trees, there is great variety in shape and size for each species.

Michael LoFurno
Philadelphia, PA

and general "plant nuts" embracing this book with zealous fervor and putting it right on their desktops for easy reference. It's a scholarly book with a quiet, poetic demeanor.

—Nancy O'Donnell

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THE ART OF CONTAINER PLANTINGS

Story by Janet Bly
Photography by Rob Cardillo

Not long ago, a few impatiens in a clay pot passed for a container planting. Now, container plantings are considered an integral part of garden design, and exuberant displays of color and foliage are the standard that we're all trying to meet. Novice gardeners and even old hands search for combinations that will enhance their gardens and look good for the season. While you can replicate a design from a magazine, creating a design of your own can be satisfying and fun.

Container design is more an art than a science, but it's always nice when there are some rules of thumb to help the art along. As one who was often frustrated with the appearance of my containers (too small, too sparse, not quite right), I'd like to pass on some tips picked up over the years.

Planting of black taro,
marigolds and lime-green
loosestrife. Design by
Burke Brothers.





A tropical delight by Andrew Bunting.

CONTAINER MAKEOVERS

PLAN THE FOLIAGE-TO-FLOWER RATIO.

Containers usually bring to mind flowers, but foliage is just as important. Foliage provides texture, color, and continuing interest when the blooming plants are taking a rest (as most do at some point in the season). In choosing container plants, experts suggest two-thirds foliage plants to one-third flowering plants.

PLANT GENEROUSLY. To achieve a look of fullness, it's important to include a lot of plants. In a recent lecture, botanical garden staff described planting containers as fully as possible—so much so that they sometimes used a shoe horn to squeeze things in. The result is that containers look good instantly and get even better as the season progresses.

START WITH LARGE PLANTS. Unless you are someone who starts containers early in the season or who has lots of patience, start out with good-sized plants in four-inch pots or larger. For economy's sake, you may find well-established hanging baskets with 3 to 5 plants less costly than the same number of smaller individual pots. Gently sepa-

rate the plants and distribute them in containers. You will usually get better results with these divisions than with small pots of the same variety.

COMBINE COLORS. Monochromatic plantings can look great—just be sure to include a variety of textures and forms. If you are mixing colors, put the strongest colors at the top and bottom and include tints of these colors as a middle layer. A formula that seems to work is two-thirds deeper colors and one-third lighter colors. If you're planning a group of containers for the same area, pick a color theme of 3 to 4 colors and use this theme in all the containers for continuity. Don't limit yourself to the same plants in all containers, but keep to the color scheme.

CONSIDER THE SITE. Think about when and where the containers will be viewed. If you plan to place them on a patio area used most often in the evening, light or pastel colors will look better than dark colors that disappear at night. For containers located in full sun, vibrant colors provide a better display than pastels that fade in strong light.

- Big containers in cast concrete or iron are beautiful and lend a sense of substance and permanence. They can also be hard on the budget (as well as back, if you need to move them around).

- You can easily achieve a similar effect using less expensive polyresin planters with a few dollars for exterior enamel spray paint and a few minutes of your time. No priming is needed and, after painting, the pots take on a distinguished look that can fool a lot of people.

- Spray paint can also unify containers that differ in size and color. If you're painting clay pots, a first coat of a primer/sealer will help ensure adhesion of the color topcoat.

Salvia leucantha with leaves at Longwood Gardens.



'Mickey Mouse' tulips at Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College.



TRY UNUSUAL PLANTS. Almost anything can be grown in a container for one or more seasons, so look beyond the annuals section in the nursery for candidates. Possibilities include grasses, perennials and small conifers, as well as evergreen and deciduous shrubs. At the end of the season, you can transfer these plants to your garden or, if they are root hardy, you may be able to leave them outside in the pots. (Ask nursery staff whether plants can survive the winter in pots above ground or whether the pots should be sunk into the ground.)

MIX TEXTURES AND FORMS. Combine broad-leaved and ferny plants and upright and trailing plants to keep things appealing. As in a border, contrasts in textures, shapes, and growth habits heighten visual interest.

MATCH CULTURAL NEEDS OF PLANTS. While even the best gardeners sometimes deny reality in the face of plants that look good together, you must consider the cultural requirements of plants that are intended to coexist in the same pot. Does one like moist soil while another prefers dry conditions? Does one do best in full sun while another likes shade? If your container plants don't like the same conditions, some are going to be unhappy. While you may be able to coax them along, it's easier to start off with plants that have similar requirements for sun and moisture.

THINK BIG. Perhaps the most common problem with container plantings is that they are just too small. If you're buying new containers, it's usually worth the extra investment to nudge up a size or two. If you're working with existing containers, group several together for greater impact. Vary height by placing containers in the back on upended pots. Just make sure that the containers complement each other and that the overall effect of the individual pots and plants works for you.



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Janet Bly is a garden writer and owner of Signature Gardens, LLC, a garden design firm based in Wynnewood, PA (www.signaturegardens.us).

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The above 3 pictures were taken at the US National Arboretum in Washington D.C. in August of 2001. When planted in the Fall of 1998, they were 3 feet tall and planted on 6 1/2 foot centers. They grew 3 feet the first year (1999), and are now 10 to 12 feet tall. It can be trimmed to any height or width to create the ultimate natural or formal hedge.

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Carol McEconomy and I have visited several gardens together. She has always preferred "collector's gardens" which have unusual plants (sometimes negatively referred to as "horticultural zoos"), while I like ones where the plants are subordinate to the overall design (sometimes referred to as "boring gardens"). I had heard that Carol had a "good" garden but she never talked about it or invited me to see it. When I finally did, I was surprised to find that she had successfully created an

outstanding collector's garden with an excellent design on two thirds of an acre outside of Philadelphia.

The evolution of the site began when the McEconomys moved to a property on the Main Line 20 years ago. They wanted a swimming pool in the backyard, but they had a forest of tulip trees and a fairly steep uphill slope instead. With the help of landscape architect Al Vick, they devised a plan to remove 54 trees and terrace the hill with a stone retaining wall. Cleverly, the pool

was located far enough from the house and high enough in the landscape to make it invisible from below. You only see the attractive stone retaining wall and the evergreens planted behind it. A year after the pool went in, Carol began attending classes at the Arboretum School of the Barnes Foundation where she met and hired her woody plants instructor, Marty Kromer, to design a cottage garden adjacent to the house. The rest of the garden came about as a result of Carol's collecting habit and her



Daylilies... yet so much more

The Garden of Carol McEconomy

Story by Linda Corson, RLA
Garden Photography by Pete Prown



Hemerocallis
'Bridgeton
Bandwagon'.

intuitive sense of design.

This extraordinary garden is all things to all people. Plant lovers are delighted to find more than 300 daylilies, no two of which are alike. As a member of the Delaware Valley Daylily Society, Carol was able to obtain many new and unusual varieties at their plant sales and auctions. Darrel Apps, hybridizer and owner of Woodside Nursery in Bridgeton, New Jersey, has been another good source for her. How can anyone resist plants with names like 'Chance Encounter',

Clockwise from top right:

A dramatic color and texture combination of yellow-leaved 'Baggesen's Gold' honeysuckle, orange-flowering milkweed, 'Elizabeth's Magic' daylily, pink agastache and pink/purple liatris.

Blue lacecap hydrangea 'Tokyo Delight' provides a cool background for the warm yellow daylily 'Mt. Helena', Spirea 'Ogon' (a Gold Medal plant) and the hot red daylilies, 'Timeless Fire' and 'Aramis' .

Carol McConomy in her garden.



Photo below by Linda Corson



Daylilies... yet so much more

'Sparkling Orange', 'Siloam Doodlebug', 'Alabama Jubilee', 'Excitable', 'Fairy's Petticoat', 'Wings of Chance' and 'Spindazzle'? Aside from the daylilies, there are sizable collections of hellebores, arisemas and epimediums, carefully planted in the shade of small ornamental trees. Carol prepared the soil with chopped leaf compost, alfalfa pellets and mushroom soil, which she replenishes every few years.

Woody plant lovers find PHS Gold Medal trees such as Persian parrotia (*Parrotia persica*) and paperbark maple (*Acer griseum*) punctuating the perennial beds. Though they aren't Gold Medal plants, specimens of tall stewartia (*Stewartia monadelpha*), aconite-foliaged full-moon maple (*Acer japonicum 'Aconitifolium'*) and sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*) are also impressive. Gold Medal shrubs such as diablo ninebark (*Physacarpus opulifolius 'Diablo'*), silver and gold red osier dogwood (*Cornus*)

sericia 'Silver and Gold'), and the yellow spirea 'Ogon' (*Spiraea thunbergii 'Ogon'*) add more color to the mix. The non-invasive, sterile-seeded, white rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus 'Diana'*) is another winner Carol uses to good effect. Vines that made the Gold Medal list are *Clematis viticella 'Betty Corning'*, covered with small hanging blue bell flowers, and buttercup ivy (*Hedera helix 'Buttercup'*), which looks content growing along the risers of stone steps.

Is this just a "gardener's garden," or would a tired spouse or a young child enjoy it, too? Absolutely. While the daylily enthusiast is studying the 300 varieties, the tired spouse can slip off to a lovely shady woodland path that skirts the perimeter of the garden, meandering behind the pool and evergreens where colors are muted and the air is cool. If all else fails, there is always the pool. Children would be surprised and delighted to see Carol's sculpted frogs sitting among seedling plants on the stone stair treads that her son built. Garden accents such as the rust-colored steel sculpture by Inta Krombolz [*profiled in the*



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Daylilies... yet so much more

February 2004 issue], the Irish straddle stone, the English chimney pot and the round tile imprinted with her grandchildren's footprints add interest and create a ready-made treasure hunt.

As a landscape architect, I was curious to see how such plant diversity could result in a coherent design. Carol created balance by defining large beds of daylilies with curves that sweep up towards the pool. The grass between the beds leads your eye through the garden. By carefully grouping shades of color—pale pinks with whites, pale yellows and pale oranges, burgundy and purples, hot oranges and reds, the daylilies behave as consistent masses of color from a distance, and are just as interesting up close. You may even see a few annual pennisetum grasses poking fuzzy heads through the foliage for a change in texture, or the hot orange of milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) mixed into the warm-color bed. *Sedum spurium* 'John Creech' with pink flowers, at 2 inches high, has been used as well to face down some of the taller plants and creates an engaging edge for some of the beds.

Carol has also used interesting slow-growing evergreens such as reddish-barked Japanese red pine, (*Pinus densiflora*), dark green dwarf Hinoki false cypress, (*Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Gracilis'), blue-needed 'Montgomery' Colorado spruce, (*Picea pungens* 'Montgomery'), yellow-leaved 'Rheingold' arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Rheingold'), green-and-white-leaved *Pieris japonica* 'Variegata' and the broadly upright, dark green *Juniperus chinensis* 'Torulosa' to create a backdrop for the waves of perennial colors in front of them. The shades and textures of these evergreens are different enough to create interest but similar enough to be harmonious. I first saw the garden in June, when no daylilies were blooming, but the evergreens themselves made a compelling sight. By skillfully using design principles, Carol has given a whole new meaning to the phrase "horticultural zoo." 

Linda Corson is a self-employed landscape architect practicing in the Delaware Valley.



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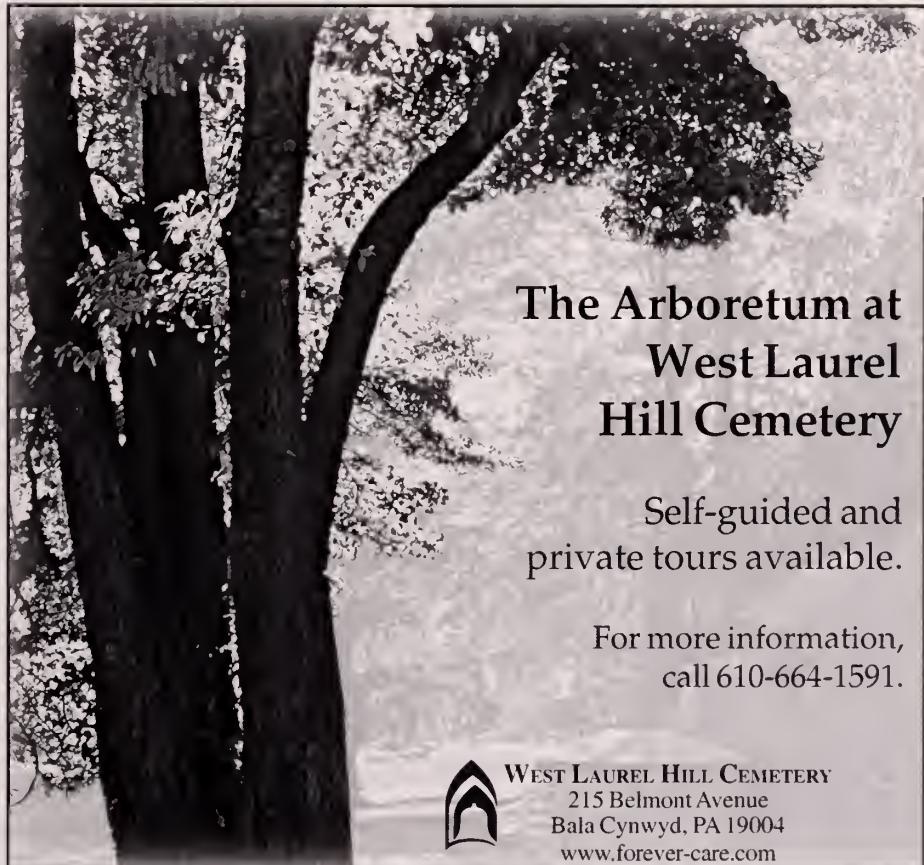
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SUPERHEROES of SUBURBIA

Story by John Gannon

Imagine strolling down your town's main street, window-shopping beneath hanging baskets of cascading flowers and shade trees that filter the sunlight. Or stepping off your local commuter train after a hard day's work and being greeted by a lush landscape teeming with beds of bright annuals. In the suburbs and towns outside of Philadelphia, these fantasy gardens aren't a dream. They're the work of plant-loving volunteers who are committed to beautifying their surroundings.



Sister Fidelis tending plants at the Dominican Retreat House in Elkins Park, PA.

Courtesy of the Dominican Retreat House

Aside from getting their hands dirty in the soil, these green-thumbed Robin Hoods also put in time raising money, organizing planting days, and ordering gardening supplies. Other public spaces benefit from the instincts of local business owners who have learned that "green" storefronts and entrances not only create a pleasant-looking environment, but also bring in more customers. Let's meet a few of these suburban superheroes and learn their secrets to greening success.

INSPIRING A GREEN COMMUNITY

Oftentimes, a community-driven greening effort starts with just one or two people before blossoming into a large-scale endeavor. Back in 1967, in the borough of Narberth, PA, Emily Parkin and Kathryn Westman started N.I.C.E. (Narberth Improvement & Clean-up Endeavor) with the idea of bringing beauty to their community and encouraging their neighbors and local businesses to help keep the town clean and green. Subsequently, Narberth's late mayor Jeff Eyster took up the cause, and, in recent years, volunteer Ted Ahern has played a major role in keeping up the

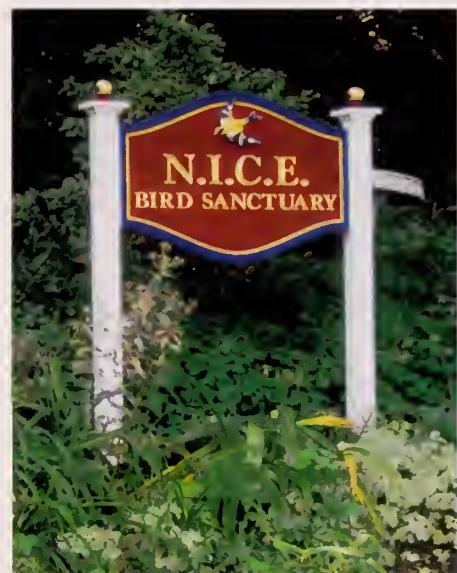
gardens and landscapes at the town's entryways, train station, and along its main street, Haverford Avenue.

A basic challenge is marshaling the manpower not only to plant the sites, but also to keep these spaces looking their best. "Volunteers are key," Ted notes. But he adds that some volunteer captains have grown older and simply cannot help as much. And, as with any town or city, there is the occasional problem of vandalism. In recent years, help has come from unlikely sources. "We've gotten great work from college kids fulfilling community-service credits," he says. "And we've also used teenagers from the courts who are mandated to do community work."

And where do the funds for these projects come from? "We send out an annual appeal letter to residents and businesses," explains Ted. "People are very appreciative of the gardens, and they have given us strong support." Narberth was recognized with a Suburban Greening Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in 2000 (see sidebar on next page), and, although it must continually work to keep the volunteer pool full, its long record of greening success makes for a hopeful future.



Volunteers at work in Rose Valley, PA.



Courtesy of Ted Ahern

The courtyard at the Radnor Hotel.

Jeff Chapman



About PHS's Suburban Greening Award

To recognize those working to create and maintain stunning suburban public-space plantings, PHS created the Suburban Greening Award. Now in its fifth year, this program reaches into suburban Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware to recognize the individuals, community groups, garden clubs, and businesses who care for public spaces, from Main Streets, libraries, traffic islands, and parks to commercial ventures and train stations. This past year, 26 groups received awards. "Each year, we honor different gardens," says PHS's Flossie Narducci. "There is never a repeat winner."

"We see some beautiful spaces and incredible gardens on our visits," says Sandy Manthorpe, chair of the Suburban Awards Committee and an evaluator of these public spaces. In addition to checking out the nominated sites, Sandy and committee member Sally Graham invariably do a bit of detective work looking for smashing gardens. "We've discovered some amazing places just on our drives," adds Sally. Of course, Sandy adds, all this work has its fringe benefits: "When we go out for an evaluation, the burning question is always, 'Where should we go for lunch?'"

For a list of Suburban Greening Award winners, please visit our website—www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org—and click on "PHS Events."

If you know of a public planting in suburban Pennsylvania, New Jersey, or Delaware that should be recognized by PHS, please contact Flossie Narducci at 215-988-8897 or specialevents@pennhort.org. The deadline for nominations is June 30, 2004.

ONE TENACIOUS TENDER

Though it's not what would normally fit under the definition of a "town," the Dominican Retreat House in Elkins Park, PA is a community. Overseen by the Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine de'Ricci, this refuge has been a place of spiritual renewal for women since 1933. And ever since 1945, its extensive grounds have been under the watchful care of Sister Fidelis Beck.

"I grew up on a farm and I've always been a jack-of-all-trades," notes Sister Fidelis, still as active as ever. In addition to overseeing the day-to-day landscape activities, she runs the greenhouse, which provides a source of additional income for the house—visitors often want to take home a plant or two to remember their restful stay. "Our visitors really enjoy the serenity here," she says.

One tough task is keeping up with the care of the landscape and the various buildings on the property, including the original mansion once home to the Elkins family. During the 1950s and '60s, the Retreat House received a high number of visitors, whose offerings helped the Sisters employ up to ten high-school boys to help out with maintenance. Today, though, with fewer visitors and a sluggish economy, the Sisters employ just two men to help care for the property, along with one woman who helps with laundry and the greenhouse.

Despite being chronically short-handed, Sister Fidelis finds a way to make it all work. In fact, the Retreat House received a Suburban Greening Award just last year. Anyone arriving in June will be awed by the 500-plus rose bushes, which light the landscape in pink, red, yellow, and white. A variety of azaleas, majestic trees, ponds, and shrines make the grounds a peaceful place for reflection. And if you happen to spy a golf cart making its way across the rolling hills, chances are it's Sister Fidelis in the driver's seat, making sure all the plantings are in top form.

A COMPANY SEES GREEN

While the suburbs obviously offer many conveniences, many suburban shopping centers and office buildings suffer from uninspired design. And if it's not the building that's bland, it's the landscape. But there are signs of horticultural hope out there.

Consider a visit to the Radnor Hotel in St. Davids, PA. Fourteen years ago, SW Bajus Ltd. purchased the former St. Davids Inn and began to transform the grounds, especially behind the building. "The land resembled a wetland or swamp," notes director of landscaping Lydia Wisner. Yet things have certainly changed.

When the hotel received a Suburban Greening Award from PHS in 2002, one evaluator raved, "It's an extraordinarily well-landscaped site," and noted that the hotel's courtyard (once a swampy wet area) is "their masterpiece ... with plant selections that add to the charm of this exceptional garden." This secluded space, with its elegant brick patio, is a sought-after location for weddings, receptions, and other special events. Anita Sayers, executive director of marketing and PR for the hotel, adds, "The award from PHS really validates all of this work."

In fact, the company's horticultural reach extends beyond the Radnor Hotel. Its other green properties—past award recipients as well—include the Wayne Hotel and the Haverford Square shopping center.

A REGION OF GARDENS

Clearly, there is a green movement afoot in the 'burbs, and an unwillingness to settle for mediocre landscapes with lackluster plantings. Throughout the greater Philadelphia region, there are radiant examples of community and commercial investment in these public spaces. Though many of these wonderful gardens existed long before PHS's Suburban Greening Award, formal acknowledgment has provided an unexpected lift. "These folks are just trying to create beautiful places," notes PHS special events manager Flossie Narducci. "They weren't doing this for glory or fame, but they've been so appreciative of being recognized." 

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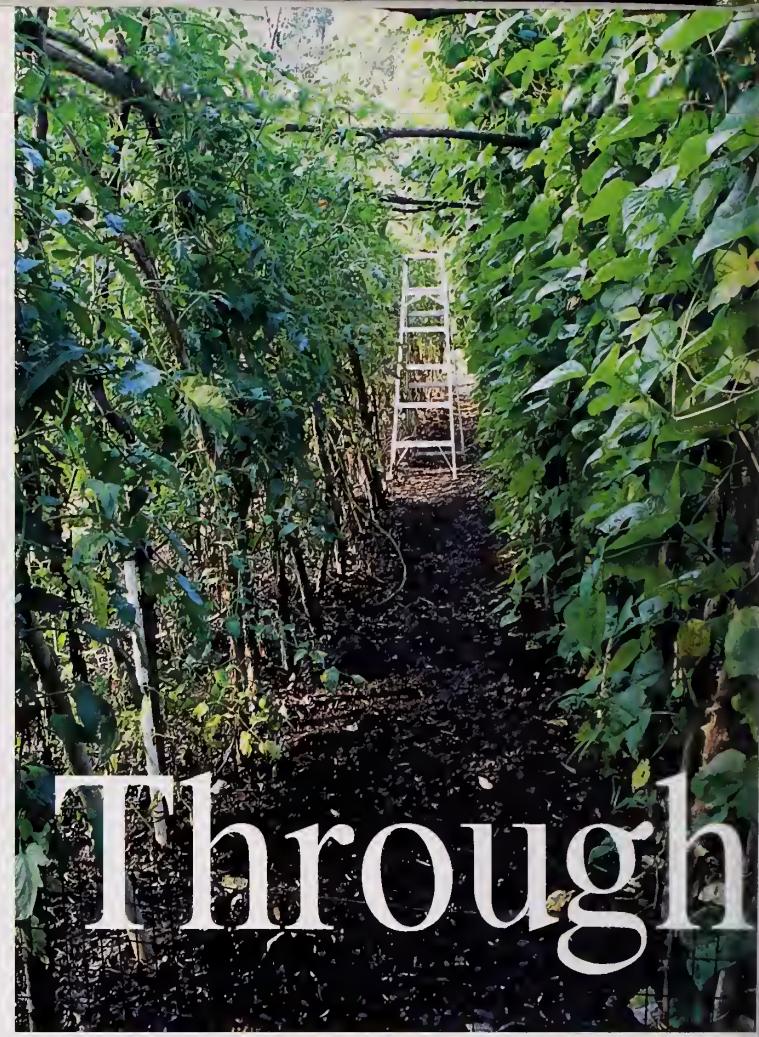
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Through





The Four Seasons

A Year of Gardening with Estella & Jim Bradley

Story by Adam Levine
Photography by John Gannon

Estella and Jim Bradley nurture their organic garden with truckloads of leaves vacuumed from neighboring streets, wastewater from the house collected in buckets to supplement rainfall, and a devotion that, if directed at a member of the animal kingdom rather than a patch of vegetables, would certainly be called love.

On 2,000 square feet in the backyard of their ranch house about 15 miles southwest of Philadelphia, the Bradleys have grown dozens of vegetable varieties for the past 12 years, which they eat fresh, freeze, can, and give away to any lucky person who visits during harvest time. The couple has many other interests, but it would be no exaggeration to call the garden the focus of their lives.

"I've had a vegetable garden almost every summer of my life, even if it was only a little bit of yard with a few tomato plants," says Estella, who began gardening with her mother as a child in

rural Michigan. "I just like to be outside. I hate to be in the house; I hate housework."

Both Bradleys are retired from professions in the sciences—Jim as a college professor, Estella as a copy editor. This training is reflected in the garden's straightforward organization and in several articles Jim has written about it, in which, for example, he translates all measurements into their metric equivalents.

The division of labor in the garden is equally clear. Estella does the planning and seed starting, Jim does most of the spading of the beds and builds the supports for tall or climbing plants.

Pete Brown



Pete Brown



Top: The garden in June.

Bottom: The same view in early September.

Estella does most of the planting, and Jim does most of the harvesting, canning, and cooking.

The gardening year for the Bradleys begins with perusal of seed catalogs in December and January. Estella plots out the next year's garden on graph paper, then buys only the seeds she needs to fill out her plan. She starts the seeds in a motley collection of recycled milk cartons and frozen orange juice cans. The first to be sown are the early cauliflower and broccoli, on Valentine's Day, and the last, near the end of March, are tomatoes and peppers and annual flowers such as marigolds. The first stop for the pots is the dimly lit furnace room, where the warmth helps speed germination. When the first green sprouts appear, Estella moves them onto shelves in front of a sunny living room window. Some crops, such as cauliflower and broccoli, also spend time in the outdoor cold frames (made with recycled aluminum storm windows) before finally being planted in the garden.

Inter-planting of various crops is the key to the productivity of the Bradley garden. "As much space as possible is occupied by two, three or even four crops every summer," Jim says. Some crops use the same space at different times, such as snow peas followed by fall broccoli and other cabbage-family crops. Others use the same space all summer, such as winter squash planted around the hills of corn. Quick or early-maturing crops are planted in spaces that will later be overrun by other plants. By the time the pole beans and large tomatoes begin to grow up, for example, the spring cauliflower and cabbages planted near them are gone.

As organic gardeners, the Bradleys use no chemical fertilizers. "We don't particularly object to them," Estella says, and Jim finishes her thought: "We just don't need them." In the fall they get several truck-loads of leaves that the local public works department vacuums off the streets. Once composted (in bins made of recycled pallets), they are spaded into the garden. More compost is also spaded in during the growing season, after an early crop is harvested and before a later one is planted in its place.



Recipes from Estella and Jim Bradley

For hot peppers, we now grow 'Mucho Nacho' instead of 'Jalapeno', and 'Big Chili' instead of 'Anaheim'. (Both are available from Harris Seeds.) They are more reliable and easier to work with. The two salsa recipes are slightly adapted from an unidentified, undated newspaper clipping, probably from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Salsa Fresca

- 1 pound ripe tomatoes, preferably plums (about 2 cups)
- 1/4 cup small scallions, white and green parts
- 4 fresh 'Mucho Nacho' peppers, seeded
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro (AKA coriander, Chinese parsley), mainly leaves
- 1 small garlic clove

Chop all ingredients finely with a large chef's knife. Mix in an acid-proof bowl. Let stand at least one hour, or up to 2 days refrigerated, stirring occasionally. You may want to strain or drain the salsa.

Pesto Bradley

The following pesto recipe evolved from two on page 428 of the *New York Times International Cookbook*, but we always use spaghetti. Two recipes of this pesto fit fairly comfortably in our 6-cup blender and make 4 meals. We freeze it in 1-cup pots, and stir in grated Parmesan cheese (about 1/2 cup) before use.

- 4 to 5 cups loose basil leaves, coarsely chopped with a large kitchen knife. We start with a 1-peck basket of basil on the stem.
- 1 large garlic clove, or 2 medium, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup olive oil, or as necessary to let the blender work
- 1/2 cup hulled sunflower seeds (instead of pine nuts)

Place part of the olive oil in the blender, adding basil, garlic and olive oil for a reasonably uniform mixture. Blend and feed and press down very carefully with a rubber spatula until it circulates freely. Add the sunflower seeds and blend, aided by the spatula, until they are all fairly finely chopped. The mixture will be stiff and demanding on the blender.

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Rather than using pesticides, Jim and Estella try to remove as many insects as possible by hand and have learned to tolerate less-than-picture-perfect plants that may have a few holes in the leaves. One exception is their use of Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a bacterial insecticide that is harmless to humans but, when applied correctly, deadly to certain caterpillars.

A problem for vegetable gardeners is keeping the hungry critters at bay. The Bradleys protect their garden with a makeshift fence, a patchwork of rusty wire mesh held up by poles of all description: curtain rods, iron pipes, wooden stakes, anything that works. As in most other areas of their garden, aesthetics take a backseat to thrift and practicality.

Jim, now 70, grew up in England during World War II, when the conservation mindset dictated that people "make do and mend," he explains. "I grew up with the mentality that you fix things, you use what you can." Estella concurs: "We can't just keep burying things in landfills. If something seems serviceable, we use it."

While not a thing of beauty, the fence deters most critters most of the time, but no protection is ever perfect. Sometimes the Bradleys trap and relocate animals, and for raccoons, they have several methods of deterrence. "Raccoons don't like to be where they can't see if anybody is approaching," Jim says, explaining that the large squash leaves that cover the ground around the corn help keep them away. They also keep a radio in a plastic bag in the garden blaring an all-news station all night long, which deters all but the most determined—or perhaps the most hard-of-hearing—raccoons.

In some ways, the gardening season never ends for the Bradleys. Leeks are harvested all winter as long as the ground isn't frozen, and parsley can be harvested unless the cold frame is buried under snow. For wintertime eating, they can tomatoes, sauce and salsa, and make a variety of pickles. They stuff two large freezers with the bounty of their harvest and often have food left over the following spring, when the never-ending cycle of life in a garden begins all over again. 

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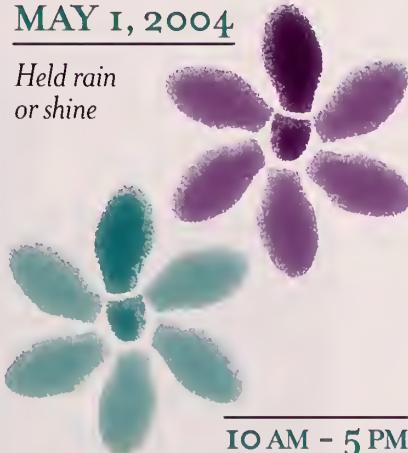
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The Blue and the Gray



In the last issue, we looked at silver foliage—leaves that get their light coloration from hairs on the leaf surface or from air pockets beneath it. This month, we're continuing the theme with plants that are often lumped in with the silvers—those with blue-green or gray-green leaves. The technical term for this is *glaucous*, and the effect is due to a waxy or powdery coating (sometimes referred to as a “bloom”) on the leaf surface. Like the hairs on silver foliage, this coating can help reflect intense light and reduce moisture loss. But unlike plants with silvery/hairy leaves, which mostly prefer dry, sunny sites, those with glaucous foliage run the gamut from sun to shade

and moist to dry.

The intensity of the blue color can vary widely depending on a number of factors, including the amount of the waxy coating, the age of the leaf, and the overall vigor of the plant. On some plants, you can actually wipe the “bloom” off with the oil on your fingers (or with sprays of horticultural oils, which is why they are typically not recommended for plants that have blue leaves). On others, the blue is more a part of the leaf surface, so it tends to be more persistent. Strong sun and rain can sometimes damage the coating, but actively growing foliage typically replaces it as needed. Young leaves are the best at keeping their color, while more mature leaves may turn nearly all green as they age.

When you're ready to give your garden the blues, you've got lots of options in all shapes and sizes. Among trees and shrubs, there are many blue-needed conifers to choose from, as well as deciduous shrubs like *Fothergilla gardenii* 'Blue Mist' for shade and dusty zenobia (*Zenobia pulverulenta*) and *Rosa glauca* for sunnier spots. Among perennials,

possibilities abound, including bleeding hearts (*Dicentra*), *Corydalis lutea*, many dianthus, dozens (if not hundreds) of hosta cultivars, *Lysimachia ephemerum*, rue (*Ruta graveolens*), *Rudbeckia maxima*, and lots of sedums, to name just a few candidates.

If you want narrow leaves, quite a number of bulbs offer gray-green leaves, and there are some particularly striking offerings among ornamental grasses, too. The old standard blue oat grass (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*) is still around, but each year brings exciting new selections as well, such as 'The Blues' little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), 'Siskiyou Blue' fescue, and 'Indian Steel' and 'Sioux Blue' Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*). Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*) has provided a wealth of beautiful blues; two of my favorites are the 4-foot-tall, very upright 'Heavy Metal', and the wide-bladed, steely blue 'Dallas Blues'.

Like silver-leaved plants, those with blue or gray foliage make great partners for pastel pink, yellow, and blue flowers, as well as peachy shades. They're also excellent with white and greenish flowers, attractive with chartreuse foliage, and dramatic with dark-leaved bedmates. Masses of a single blue-leaved plant can create an eye-catching accent, but mixing several different ones in a small area can create a washed-out effect unless you tuck in some intense greens or other colors to provide some contrast. 



Above left:
Schizachyrium scoparium 'The Blues'.

Below: The bluish leaves of *Corydalis lutea* complement the lime of *Tanacetum parthenium* 'Aureum'.

Nancy J. Ondra is a freelance garden writer who lives in Bucks County, PA. She has written several books including *Grasses: Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design* (Storey Books).



• BY MARILYN ROMENESKO

The Fragrant and the Flamboyant

Who can resist the "fragrance of gardenias" in a versatile and sensational plant? That's how Doug Croft, a horticulturist at Chanticleer, describes the scent of *Vigna caracalla*, commonly known as corkscrew vine. While this vine has only recently become commercially available, it's been growing at Chanticleer for the past five years.

Chanticleer's plant came from Monticello, the grand Virginia estate of Thomas Jefferson. Doug trains it to grow up a support against a wall, and the vine is thriving there, reaching a length of 20 feet in one season. It blooms from mid-summer into fall and prefers the hottest months for flowering. The vine does best in its second and successive years of growth and likes full sun and regular moisture. Swirled cream and lavender, the 1-1/2- to 2-inch flowers grow in clusters from 6 to 12 inches long. I'm told their fragrance can fill a room when cut for a bouquet.

You can start corkscrew vine from seed, but once the plant is established, the permanent root can be lifted in the fall and grown indoors through winter. New plants can be propagated by either stem cuttings or root cuttings. According to Doug, a piece of the permanent root "the size of a small sweet potato" can pro-

duce a new plant.

Unlike the heat-loving corkscrew vine, one beautiful new *Nemesia* typically thrives in the cooler temperatures of spring and fall. However, the new series called Sunsativa is more tolerant of hot weather and it blooms continually throughout the summer months. Available in a range of new colors and color combinations, the Sunsativa cultivars sound downright delicious: 'Banana' (yellow and pale pink), 'Coconut' (white with yellow), 'Pineapple' (creamy yellow with orange eyes), 'Blackberry' (deep pink with orange eyes), 'Cranberry' (scarlet red), 'Mango' (pale yellow with purple and orange eyes), 'Lemon' (golden yellow), and the scrumptious-sounding 'Peach' that's pictured here (peach, pink, and purple with orange eyes).

While the individual flowers are relatively small, the plants are so floriferous that the foliage is barely visible. Most have a mounded or trailing habit, though some, like 'Peach', are upright and more compact. They reach a height of 10 inches, and the recommended spacing is 10 to 12 inches apart for landscape beds. They perform best in full sun or partial shade in well-drained soil.

Due to the diminutive nature and detail of the flowers, these bicolor *Nemesia* cultivars are best displayed in raised planters for closer viewing. Alyson Kovatch, the



Above: Corkscrew vine.

Bottom left: *Nemesia* Sunsativa series.

owner of Londonderry Greenhouses in Cochranville, PA, says "The Sunsativa series is the most exciting new collection of plants for this year." She plans to use them in baskets and other combination plantings. *Nemesias* will also be available in 4-inch pots at retail outlets in our region.

So, whether you choose the fragrant corkscrew vine or the flamboyant *Nemesia* Sunsativa, you will be rewarded with unusual, showy and rather curious flowers.



A project manager for PHS's Philadelphia Green program, Marilyn Romenesko is

a trained horticulturist and ISA-certified arborist. She gardens avidly in Wilmington, Delaware.



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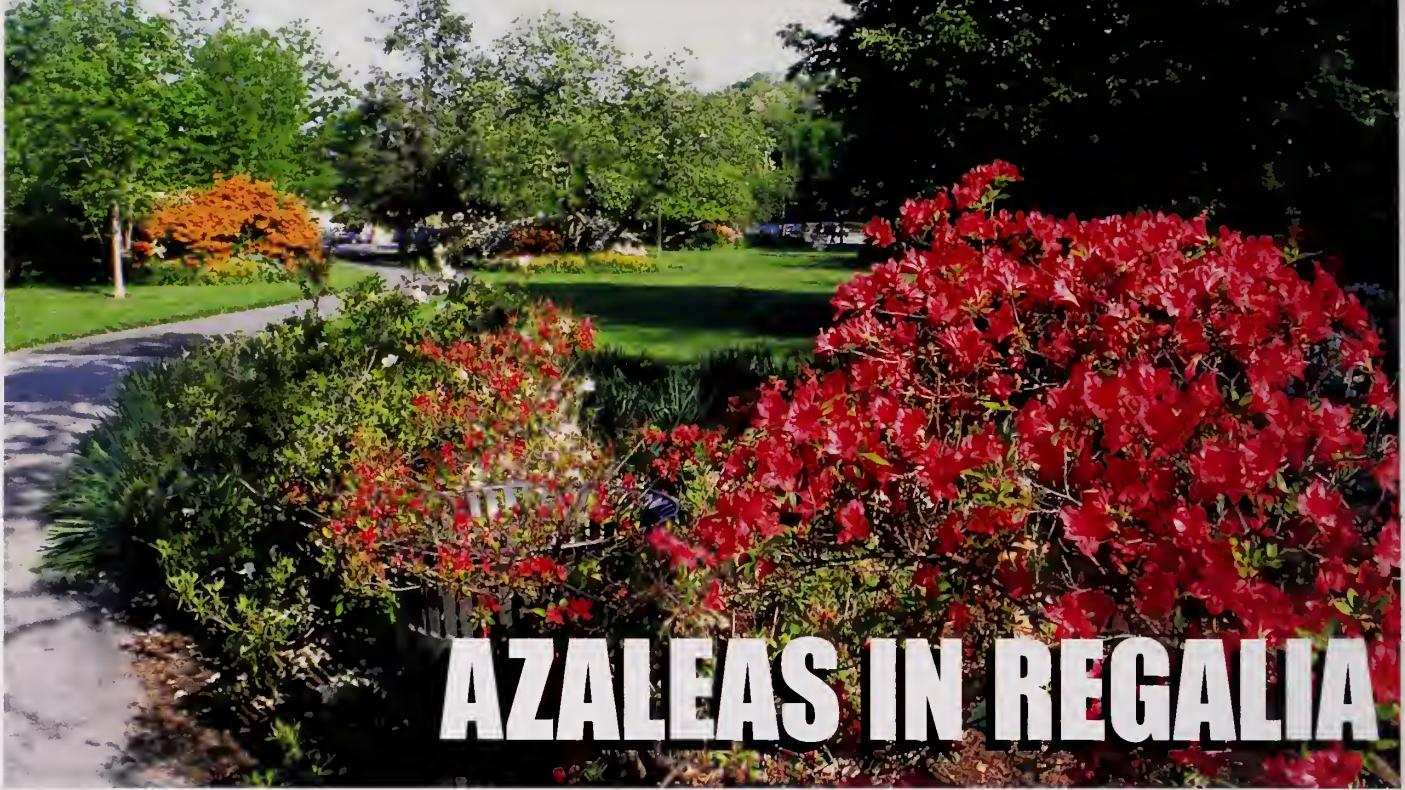
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AZALEAS IN REGALIA

by Kathryn Newland

Spring announces its arrival with the blooming of hundreds of azaleas and rhododendrons in hues of white, pink, purple and red. At the half-century old Azalea Garden in Fairmount Park, this serene four-acre oasis located behind the world-renowned Philadelphia Museum of Art captivates visitors with a spectacular collection of blooming shrubs that offers seasonal variety throughout the year.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society dedicated the Azalea Garden in 1952, using a design by landscape architect Frederick Peck (also an active volunteer for PHS and at the Flower Show). After years of diminishing resources for the garden's maintenance, PHS partnered with the Fairmount Park Commission in 1989 to undertake a \$400,000 renovation of the garden with private funding. "Given its location, the Azalea Garden is a highly visible, much loved public space," notes J. Blaine Bonham, Jr., PHS executive vice president. "We wanted to reinvent the garden and create an attractive, inviting setting for its visitors."

PHS hired the firm of Shusterman & Steiger to undertake a management and rehabilitation plan for the garden. Early on in the process, the original azaleas were rejuvenated under the direction of Fred Galle (whose book, *Azaleas*, is considered the definitive volume on the subject). "Fred also helped with the overall assessment," notes landscape architect Victoria Steiger. "We ended up removing azaleas and rhododendrons that were past their prime and, because pruning hadn't been done in ages, other plants were pruned way back to encourage new growth." Victoria adds that some azaleas were also transplanted to better blend the garden's color schemes.

Next came the building of a new entrance and focal point for the Azalea Garden—a pergola anchored by a stone-seat wall and brick terrace. To offer four seasons of interest, new trees and hundreds of shrubs expanded the plant palette. Today, shrubs like *aesculus*, *chionanthus*, *cotinus*, *forthergilla*, *halesia*, *hydrangea*, *holly*, *pieris*,

stewartia, and even *parrotia* join glowing azaleas to delight the senses. Masses of early-blooming crocus, tulips, and daffodils put on a show that signals spring has finally arrived, while native and hybridized azaleas and rhododendrons reach their peak in early May. Summer flowers and perennials like *anemone*, *heuchera* and *perovskia* continue the cascades of color through the fall, as does the late-summer show of crape myrtle trees.

During the warmer months, passers-by are sure to discover wedding parties that come for the incredible photo backdrop. Groups of mothers with babies spread out blankets for a morning of pleasant activity, and couples enjoy a fragrant, romantic moment nestled on the teak benches scattered throughout.

A close collaboration between PHS and the Fairmount Park Commission guides ongoing maintenance of the Azalea Garden. "We keep it looking fabulous with a landscape contractor's services and the able hands of our 15-member volunteer group—the Friends of the Azalea Garden," says project manager Marilyn Romenesko. The Friends come out one Saturday each month from April to November to plant, weed, and water. You'll find them cutting back the dwarf crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* sp.), dividing hostas, or planting the hottest summer-bloomers available on the market. They've even been known to come out late on an August evening to water during a dry spell.

PHS's annual Azalea Garden Gala (to be held on May 13 from 5:30-8 pm, at the peak of the azalea blooming season) raises a portion of the money needed for the garden's upkeep. Delectable foods, cool drinks, sublime music, and the greatest array of garden party hats in the region make it a very popular event—a grand celebration of this true horticultural gem in the heart of Philadelphia.

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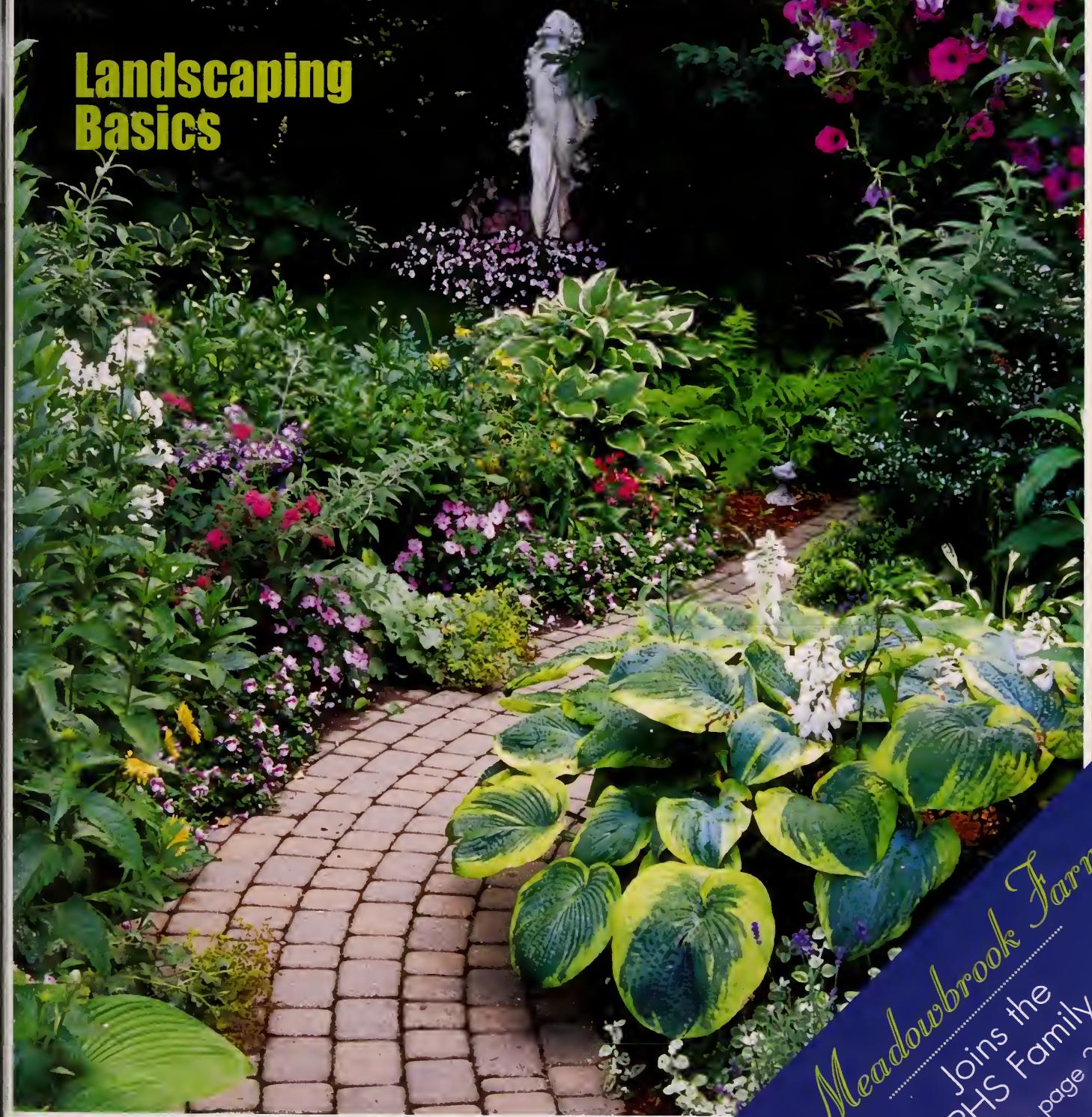
GREEN scene

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Landscaping Basics

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(See page 26)



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Do you eagerly plop things into the ground around your house each spring without a thought to the overall design of your property? Or maybe you've carefully planned everything out, but something is just not working. In this article, landscape architect Nancy O'Donnell shares some basic design concepts and thoughtful tips that will help demystify the art of creating a beautiful, tranquil landscape around your house.



14 Perennial Favorites

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's urban greening program, Philadelphia Green, employs a veritable army of horticulturists, landscape designers, and intrepid gardeners who really know their plants. Here, a few members of the staff have come up with a roster of 20 super-reliable perennials that look great and thrive in our region. Get out a pad and pencil; you'll want to take this list along on your next trip to the nursery.

22 A Case of the Tortured Topiary

Move over, Sherlock Holmes: horticulturist Stephanie Cohen and *Green Scene* editor Pete Prown have teamed up to sniff out some truly shocking gardening crimes and misdemeanors. They also have some helpful tips to keep you on the straight and narrow. It's quite elementary, Watson.

26 SPECIAL FEATURE: Welcome to Meadowbrook Farm

When you think of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, you also think of the Philadelphia Flower Show and Philadelphia Green. Now, thanks to a generous bequest from J. Liddon Pennock, Jr., Meadowbrook Farm is part of the PHS Family, too. Learn more about this fascinating estate, stunning garden and exceptional retail nursery . . . and why you should visit soon.

30 Caring for Your Trees and Shrubs

Trees and shrubs are the foundations of a great garden, but they can seem intimidating to the beginning gardener. Here, Joe Ziccardi, coordinator of the PHS Gold Medal Award program, offers basic guidelines for choosing, planting, and caring for your so-called "woody" plants. From choosing the healthiest specimen to finding the right location, these are fundamental techniques that every gardener needs to know.

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover photo by Rob Cardillo (Kehlar Garden, Tamaqua, PA).

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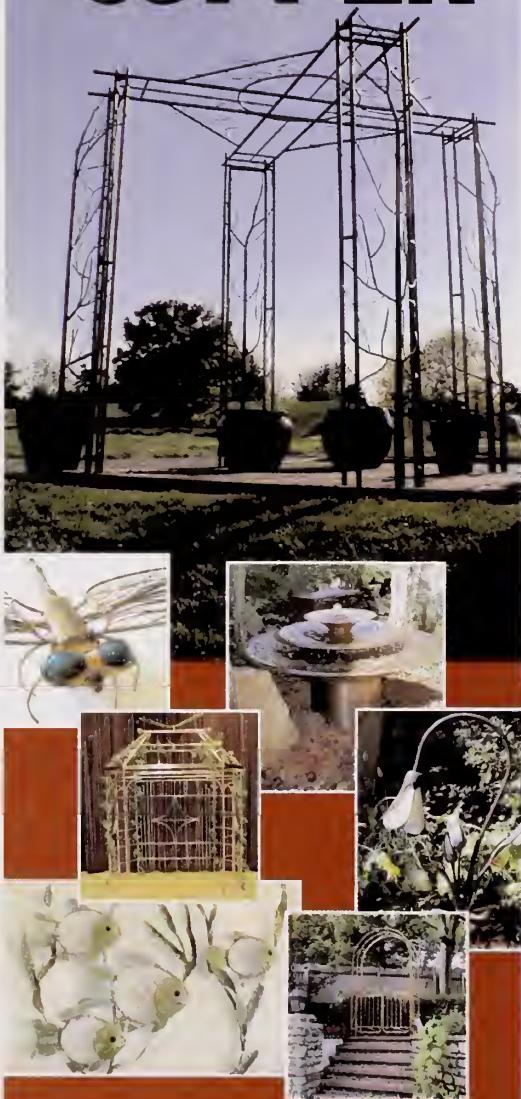
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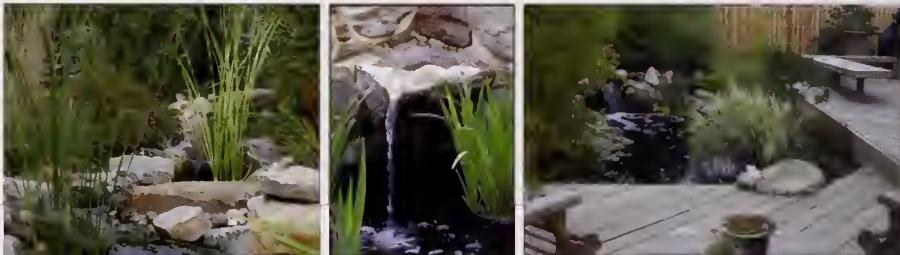
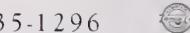


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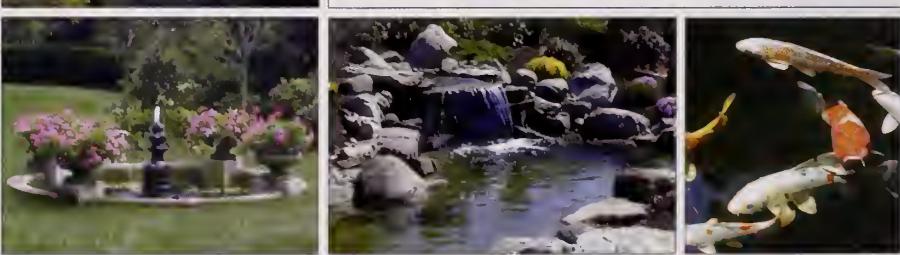


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Many *Green Scene* readers are homeowners and, unless you live in an apartment or condo, quite a few have an actual landscape to manage, such as a lawn, a flower border and shrubs. If I had to guess, I would also think that most of you, like me, would simply like to do it *better*. And that's the simple theme of this year's special June issue—basic landscaping for the home gardener.

I live in a traditional suburban neighborhood outside Philadelphia and, while walking or driving around, regularly spy the usual culprits of landscaping woe. Far and away the most apparent is the overabundance of **mulch**. Each spring, folks have mountains of the stuff deposited on their driveways, soon to be spread out around every tree, shrub and rock on the property. Granted, a nicely mulched garden has a certain tidiness about it, but I think we can all agree that a mulched bed with a few annuals tucked into it does not constitute "gardening." That may seem obvious to *Green Scene* readers, but I fear that sometimes homeowners confuse mulching with gardening.

I was speaking with a local gardening professional the other day, sharing our favorite "war stories" about landscaping, good and bad. She mentioned how important it is to consider the **color of our homes** when adding ornamental plants to one's properties. "Your house is part of the landscape," she reminded me. Good thought. In fact, last May I remember driving past a nearby house built from unpainted bricks of a maroon/burgundy hue. Yet in front of it was a line of ghastly, fire engine-red azaleas. "Can you imagine if they were orange?" she quipped.

One aspect of home landscaping where I diverge from my neighbors' tastes is about **planting for privacy**. I admit, I'm a little compulsive about privacy, but I like the idea of the lawn area as a secluded retreat and I envy the English all their walls. Call me unpatriotic, but I look askance at the wide-open American front lawn and think what a shame that few families actually use that space, precisely because it is usually too exposed for comfort. It's simply mowed and mulched from one house to the next, with no other function than to serve as a pretty picture. *Ho-hum.*

Meanwhile, I'm slowly planting along the perimeter of my front and side yards to blot out the stares of passersby. Eccentric, perhaps, but the numbers of hollies, weigela, ninebark, viburnum, and hydrangea I've planted—many of them **PHS Gold Medal Plants**—will eventually grow into a lovely green barrier between me and the street just yonder. I doubt the neighbors care much for my



MAILBOXES, ETC.

defensive approach to landscaping, but it's an option that does work; moreover, it's cheaper and far better-looking than wooden stockade fencing. Just takes a bit longer to grow in.

I do, however, fall victim to such landscaping clichés as draping roses and clematis over the lamppost, and even planting the dreaded mailbox garden. I find the **mailbox garden** one of the most unusual of American horticultural phenomena, yet I secretly admire them and put one in myself. I just don't know *why*.

Regardless of our individual garden eccentricities, I hope to pick up a few tips for myself from this issue of *Green Scene*. Compared to other manicured properties in my neighborhood, my landscaping practices are perhaps a little sloppy. (I attribute this to the fact that I grew up across the road from a working dairy farm in Connecticut. I think when the main focal point of your property has black and white spots and says *Moo*, you tend not to fuss about neatly trimmed borders or velvety lawns.)

So what are you going to find in this issue? We've got a fine primer of basic landscaping tips, as well as stories on **tree and shrub care**, great no-hassle **perennials**, and a look at the popular hobby of **water gardening**, which has its own array of landscaping (and/or water-scaping) needs. Certainly, some may find the perfect solution to their landscaping needs by hiring a lawn service, but for us do-it-yourselfers, there's good information to be found in these pages. Dig in and enjoy.

Pete Brown
email: greenscene@pennhort.org

Exciting news!

This spring, PHS accepted a bequest from the late Mr. & Mrs. J. Liddon Pennock, Jr. of their former estate, **Meadowbrook Farm**. Turn to page 26 to learn more about this exciting new member of the PHS family, as well as visitor tips and information. This gift is the beginning of a wonderful new chapter in the history of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.



SIMPLE RULES FOR A BETTER LANDSCAPE

by Nancy Q. O'Donnell



Rob Cordillo

We all want to be better gardeners, and I have no more important advice than to get in the habit of thinking about your entire property as “the garden”: the front, the back, the driveway, even the untidy bit where the trashcans live. The garden is not just the perennial border, or the vegetable plot, or that little strip where you plant your marigolds. It’s your whole outside world. In this article, we’ll look at a few basic tips that will make your property look better, easier to manage and healthier all around.

FRONT AND CENTER

Let’s start with the most public part of your landscape, the part that all your neighbors see and envy you for—the front garden. The elements are usually a lawn, a driveway, a path to the front door, perhaps a mailbox, a lamppost and some assortment of trees and shrubs. You might, for example, want your lawn to evoke acres of English green leading up to a baronial mansion, even if it’s really a postwar ranch. You want the shrubs to display your elegant and discerning taste and your trees to have a

dignity and presence that speaks of history and longevity. Here are a few ideas to help attain that goal:

It doesn’t take a tremendous effort to have a velvet lawn, but it does take the right effort. Whether you cut the grass or have it done for you, you need to cut it properly. Never scalp it by removing more than a third of the blades. Fertilize it according to the national holiday rule: around Memorial Day, Labor Day and Halloween. Skip the lawn and choose a groundcover if it’s very shady. An expanse of solid green pachysandra will

always look better than thin mossy turf.

Shrubs are social creatures. They are at their best and brightest when nestled with their fellows. Nothing looks more forlorn than a poor little shrub plopped in the middle of the lawn, in constant fear of the lawn mower, lonely and far from its neighbors over by the foundation. If it's under 12 feet tall, make it a part of a bed, grouped with several other shrubs, small trees or grasses.

On the other hand, big **trees** are loners. If you have the room, place your oak to set off and shade the house just so, give it a healthy mulched ring where it meets the ground and leave it alone. However, definitely avoid giant **mulch mountains** (AKA, mulch volcanoes) around your trees. A tree's trunk should be exposed to ground level. When mulch is piled higher, rodents can burrow in there and chew on the trunk and various other fungal diseases can breed in the moist mulch and affect the tree's health. And let's not even talk about what Rover's sprinkling can do to the tree's bark when that moisture is unable to dry.

Speaking of mulch, you should also forgo any undignified, doily-esque plantings of petunias, hostas or anything else in the mulch at a tree's base. Muscular **roots** emerging from the tree and ground are a thing of beauty in itself and a superfluous circular planting around them can only detract. Small bulbs nestled against the roots are best if they appear to be grouped by nature, not man.

Always put your best Martha Stewart moves out front where they really count. Go ahead and train that eye-popping purple clematis on the **lamppost**, but unless the light is located in a planting bed, it's best not to overdo it with too many vines hanging from the post.

A beautiful **container** overflowing with flowers is a classy addition to the front door. It's also an opportunity for seasonally

appropriate decorations. Group pumpkins and mums in fall, greens are obvious for holiday time, and use your ingenuity to come up with other displays. One of the brightest spots in winter I've ever seen was a pyramid of bright oranges arranged in a terracotta pot. With juice oranges going for \$2 a dozen, why not?

THE REST

The front is important to view from the outside in. The rest of the garden is for family and invited guests. Here you must think about what you do in your garden as you go about your daily business throughout the year.

In **winter**, we rush from car to door; by summer we linger in the sun, so plant accordingly. Put late winter's subtle offerings near your usual entrance. Plant a treat for your sole enjoyment in a spot near the garage door. Hellebores, winter- and witch hazels, and early bulbs are great candidates. These private pleasures won't wow your neighbors, but they'll make you smile through a wet and windy March.

For the other seasons, paint with a broader brush. Spring bulbs, summer flowers, and fall grasses are best planted in quantity. If you don't have the room or energy for all that, **choose one season of bloom** to concentrate your plantings in and go gangbusters. Plantings are best designed as a Mozart concerto—theme and variation (or a pop song—chorus and verse). The theme is the unifying feature, the variation is the spice. Just like a musical chorus, you repeat the same motif several times. In between are the variations.

So let's say you're focusing on one fall bed. You may plant repeating groups of fountain grass with 'Purple Dome' asters in front and 'Alma Potschke' asters behind them. Elsewhere, dwarf fountain grass can sit at the front with other fall plants in between. Professionals also always use odd



Cordillo

Above: River birch trees in an edged perennial bed.
(Stephanie Cohen garden, Collegeville, PA)

Far right: Ornamental kale and Osage orange in a container.
(Ballymore, Ambler, PA)

Right: A tree burdened with a "mulch mountain."



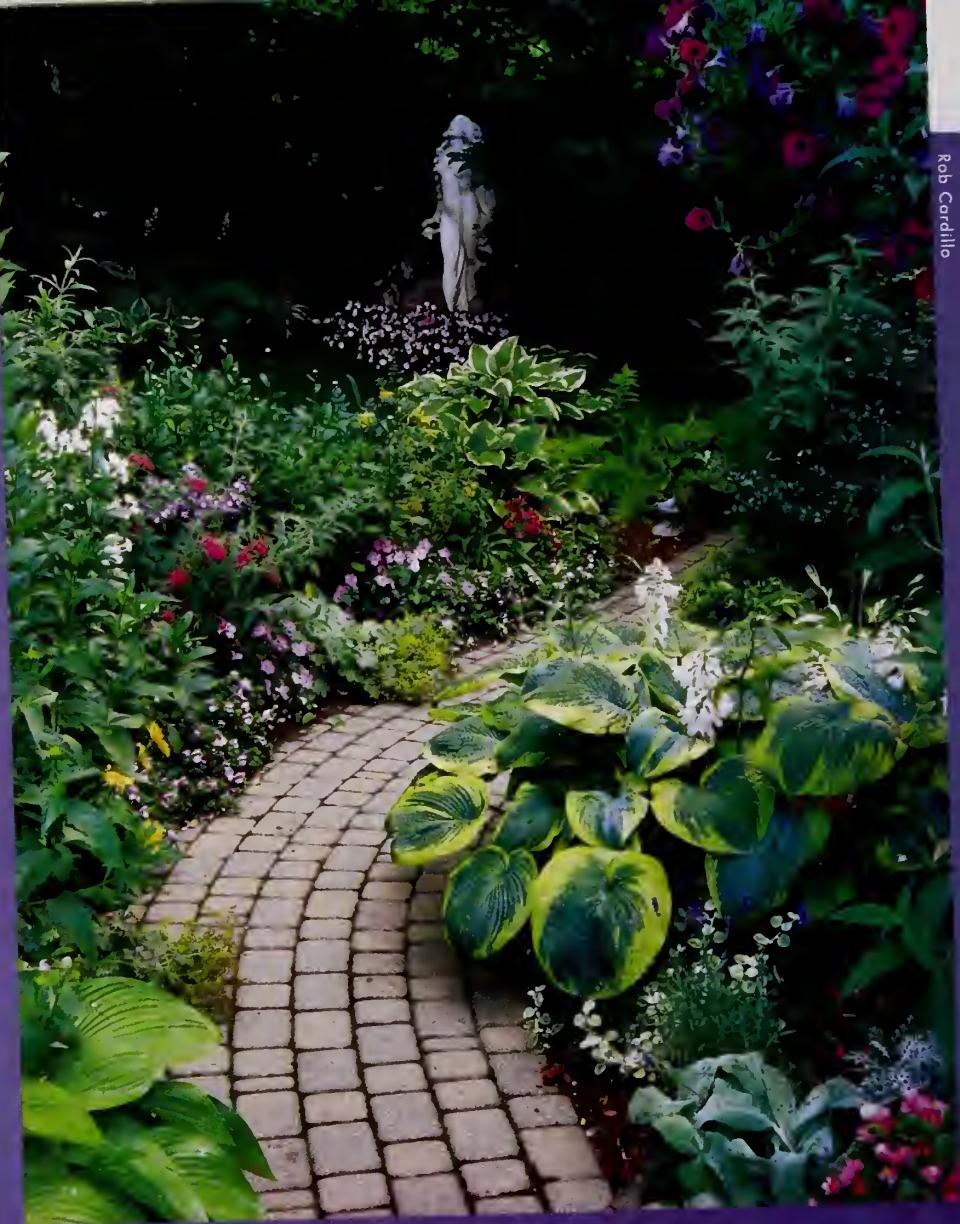
Pete Brown



Rob Cordillo

BETTER LANDSCAPE

Perennials along
a curved path.
(Kehlor garden,
Tamaqua, PA)



Rob Cardillo

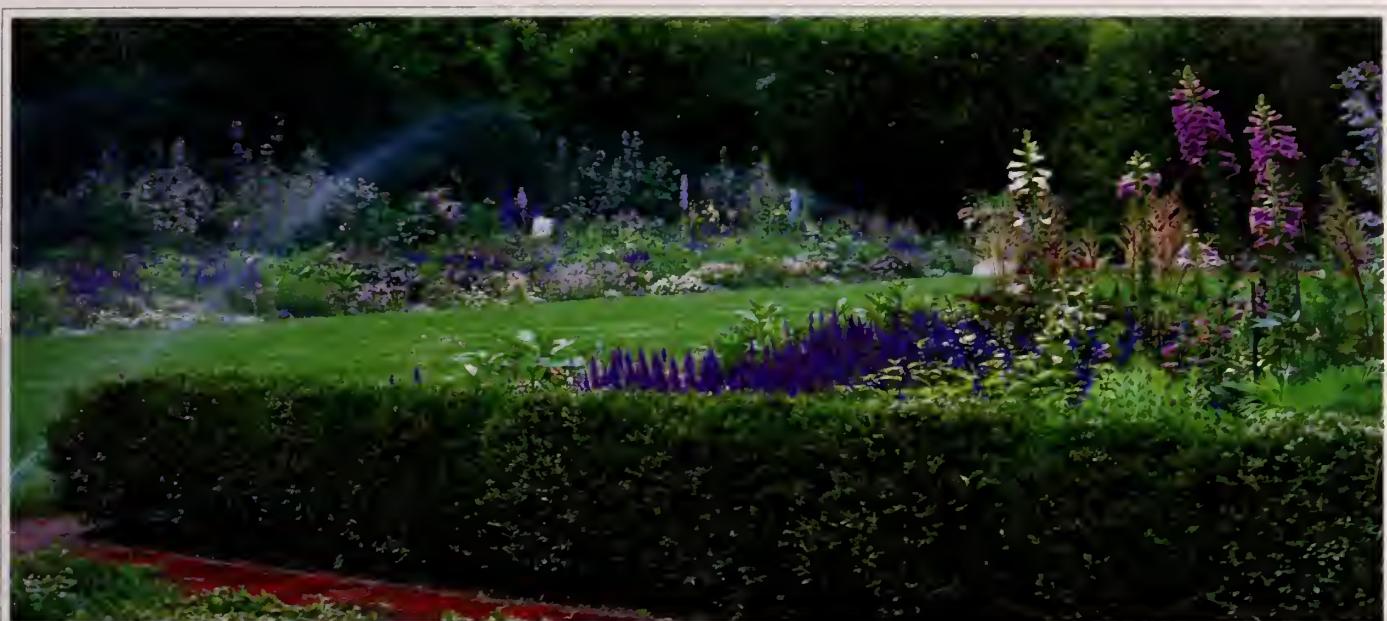
numbers of plant groupings: fives, sevens, nines, and so on. Don't ask why; it just looks better.

Borders are so called because that's where people usually put them—at the edges. But there's no law—many of the most interesting gardens have island beds that allows for movement around them.

If borders are along the property lines and have the duty to screen some objectionable view, remember that it can be better to break up the view by planting a shrub border with both deciduous and evergreen plants, rather than planting a solid line of giant arborvitae. It will give the border a far more varied and attractive appearance.

That goes for **screening** other objects like air conditioning units and trash can corrals, too. You can inadvertently call attention to something by trying too hard to hide it. If you want the big hedge, go for it, but be ready to prune at least once a year, and don't let it get taller than you can comfortably care for, or your hedge will end up looking like something in a Dr. Suess book.

Most important, your garden should be a **pleasure** for you, not another source of stress. Make sure there's a spot with comfortable seating, a place for your favorite beverage, and time to enjoy it. 



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Alan & Linda Detrick

Philadelphia Green's

Contributions by Aimee Fisher, Eileen Gallagher, Carl Haefner, Marilyn Romenesko and Joy Lawrence

Every year, the staff from Philadelphia Green, a program of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, help plant thousands of perennials throughout the city, from Center City to urban neighborhoods in every direction. As such, they are an excellent source of information for plants that thrive in the Philadelphia region...including your garden. Let's hear what specimens the experts recommend on this topic of, dare we say, *perennial* interest.

Gaura



Yarrow



Pete Brown

Rob Cordillo

TOP 20

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Perennials





Barrenwort (*Epimedium* sp.): A great plant for dry shade. Place where early-blooming flowers can be viewed. Cut back the previous season's dead foliage in late March. New foliage emerges soon after bloom.

Black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* sp.): Deep yellow to russet flowers. Amazingly drought tolerant, even in full sun. Butterflies love it.

[RECOMMENDED CULTIVARS: '*HERBSTONE*', *R. FULGIDA* '*GOLDSTURM*'.]



Bluestar (*Amsonia tabernaemontana* and *A. hubrichtii*): Tough plant with feathery foliage that stays clean and disease-free throughout the seasons. Has blue flowers in spring and wonderfully golden foliage in fall.

Boltonia (*Boltonia asteroides*): Abundant lavender-pink or pure white blossoms make for great fall color at the back of the sun-to-part-shade border. Very drought tolerant as well.

[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: '*SNOWBANK*'.]

Coral Bells (*Heuchera* sp.): Highly shade tolerant. A large variety of cultivars is available, featuring lime-green to red-brown foliage with white to cream and pink to red blossoms. There's one for every gardener.

[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: *H. VILLOSA* '*SEPTEMBER BRIDE*'.]

Catmint (*Nepeta* sp.): Blue-purple to lavender flowers with gray-green foliage. Very long blooming season. Prefers full sun.

[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: *N. RACEMOSA* '*WALKER'S LOW*'.]

False Indigo (*Baptisia australis*): Gorgeous purple-blue color in June and rarely needs watering, even in a full-sun location. Needs staking, however, and 2 to 3 seasons to get established.





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Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*):

One of several *Pennisetum* grass species that do well in this area. These are super-tough plants that are drought resistant once established and feature graceful foliage with beige to burgundy flowerheads. Adds winter interest to the garden, too. Prefers full sun.

[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: THE DWARF-SIZED 'LITTLE BUNNY'.]

Gaura (*Gaura lindheimeri*): Airy white or pink flowers blossom heavily on delicate stems in full or part sun. Cut back for a second flush of bloom later in the summer.

[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: 'SISKIYOU PINK'.]

Lilyturf (*Liriope sp.*): Clump forming plant with narrow, variegated leaves that are pale green and white. Takes sun, shade and all sorts of random abuse—dogs, kids, drought, etc. Can be used as a groundcover, too. Prefers full to part sun.

[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: *L. SPICATA* 'SILVER DRAGON'.]

Alan & Linda Derrick



Merrybells (*Uvularia grandiflora*):

Clump-forming native plant with pale-yellow, bell-shaped flowers in early spring. A reliable shade bloomer with a dash of elegance.



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New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*): This late-summer flowering plant features masses of purple flowers and attracts butterflies like mad. Grows sun to part shade.

[RECOMMENDED CULTIVARS: THE DWARF 'PURPLE DOME' AND FULL-SIZED 'ANDENKEN AN ALMA PÖTSCHKE'.]



Rose 'Red Ribbons': Low, spreading habit with deep red blossoms in June and a second show in September. Doesn't need spraying with fungicide. Makes a wonderful groundcover rose in sunny locations.

Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*): Dramatic blue to lavender blooms on spiked stems in late summer. Needs full sun, but puts on a tremendous show. Adds height to border plantings.



Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica*): Wonderful flowers each May. They don't last long, but put on a great show nevertheless. The trick is to dig and separate plants every few years. Need full sun, but are very drought tolerant.

Sunflower, Perennial (*Helianthus* sp.): Lemon-yellow blossoms on 4-to-6-foot stems in late summer. A sun lover.
[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: *HELIANTHUS 'LEMON QUEEN'*.]

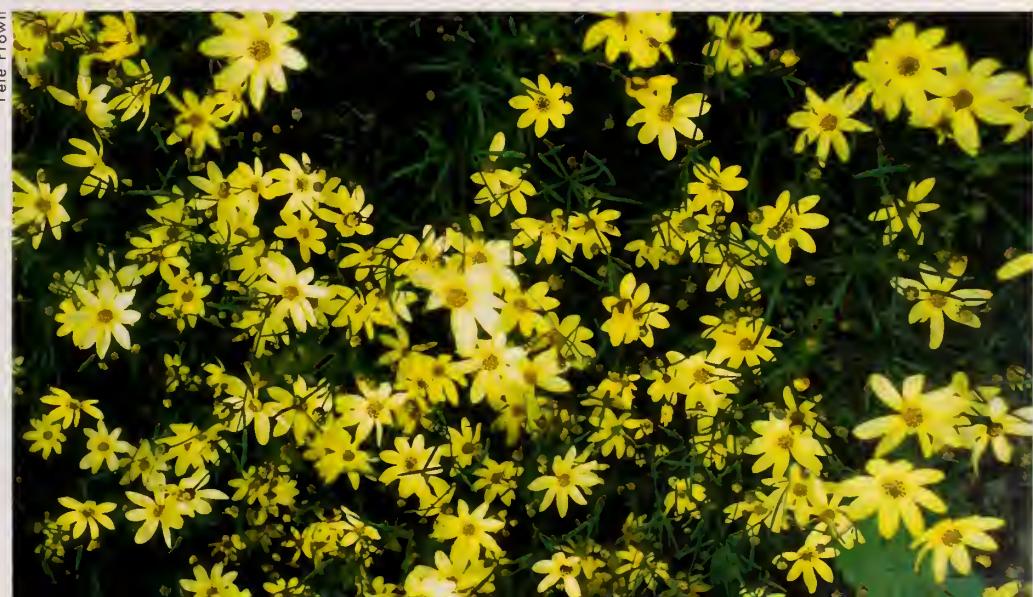
Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*): Upright, clump-forming grass. In full sun, its blue leaves turn yellow in autumn. Height tops out around 3 to 4 feet.
[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: 'HEAVY METAL'.]

Tickseed (*Coreopsis verticillata*): Grown in full to part sun, this dwarf plant is a sturdy, reliable bloomer with hundreds of small, yellow blossoms on thin, gossamer stems. Also check out its charming pink cousin, *C. rosea*.
[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: 'MOONBEAM'.]



Toad Lily (*Tricyrtis* sp.): This late-summer and fall-flowering plant looks best in mass. It's easy to transplant and blooms for a long time. Plant in shade; might need a little supplemental watering in dry soil.

Yarrow (*Achillea* sp.): Yellow, red or pink blossoms on lacy leaves; medium green foliage. Reliable bloomer in sunny locations, even in drought.
[RECOMMENDED CULTIVAR: A. 'CORONATION GOLD'.]



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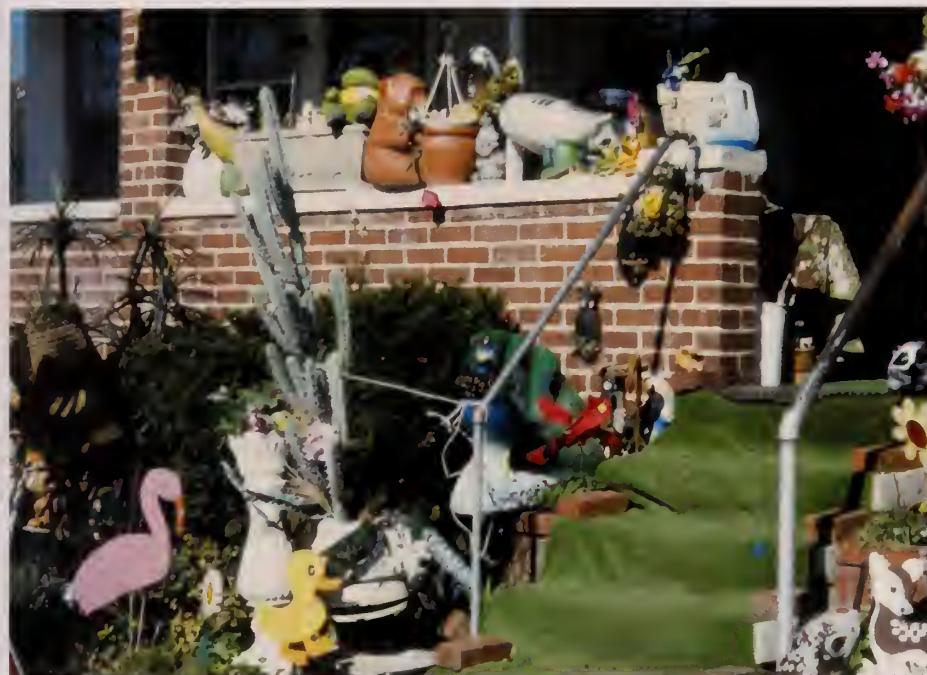
While much of this *Green Scene* issue is devoted to good landscaping practices, we'll take a brief detour and show you images of a few landscapes that are, well...*less than perfect*. There are several useful lessons to be learned here.

Text by Pete Prown

Photographs by
Stephanie Cohen

JUST SAY... NO





Generally, a garden looks best with one or two focal points. This one has 72 of them.

Lesson: Less really *is* more.



3

There are rock gardens and then...there *aren't*. You might call this a "pebble garden."

Lesson: Don't mix mulches. This bed also needs many more plants.

1 A case of tortured topiary. Carefully trimmed topiaries look best when they have a nice balance to their form, something which can take years to develop. This one looks like it was pruned back hard in one day.

Lesson: Periodically, step back from your pruning job to get a better perspective on the whole. Also, read a few books on proper topiary techniques.



4 A “hog tied” clump of *Miscanthus* grass. (Doesn’t look very comfortable, does it?)

Lesson: If you don’t want the blades of ornamental grass spilling over the sidewalk, plant it well back from the edge of the border. Grasses, in general, should also be given enough room to spread out.

5

Here, a small formal pool is dwarfed by an enormous topiary shrub, completely throwing off the balance of the view. Either the containers surrounding the pond need to be larger, or the shrub needs to be reduced dramatically.

Lesson: Always think about *scale*.

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6

This violently “topped” tree is now sending up suckers from the top of its trunk. Can you spell “e-y-e-s-o-r-e”?

Lesson: If a large tree has outgrown its location, it's often best to remove it entirely.



7

Here is an ungainly “berm,” planted frugally with a handful of spreading junipers and other conifers. It resembles a tumor on the landscape.

Lesson: Berms can be functional as sound or traffic barriers, but they should be heavily planted and made to look as natural as possible. 

• s p e c i a l f e a t u r e o n Mead

Welcome to

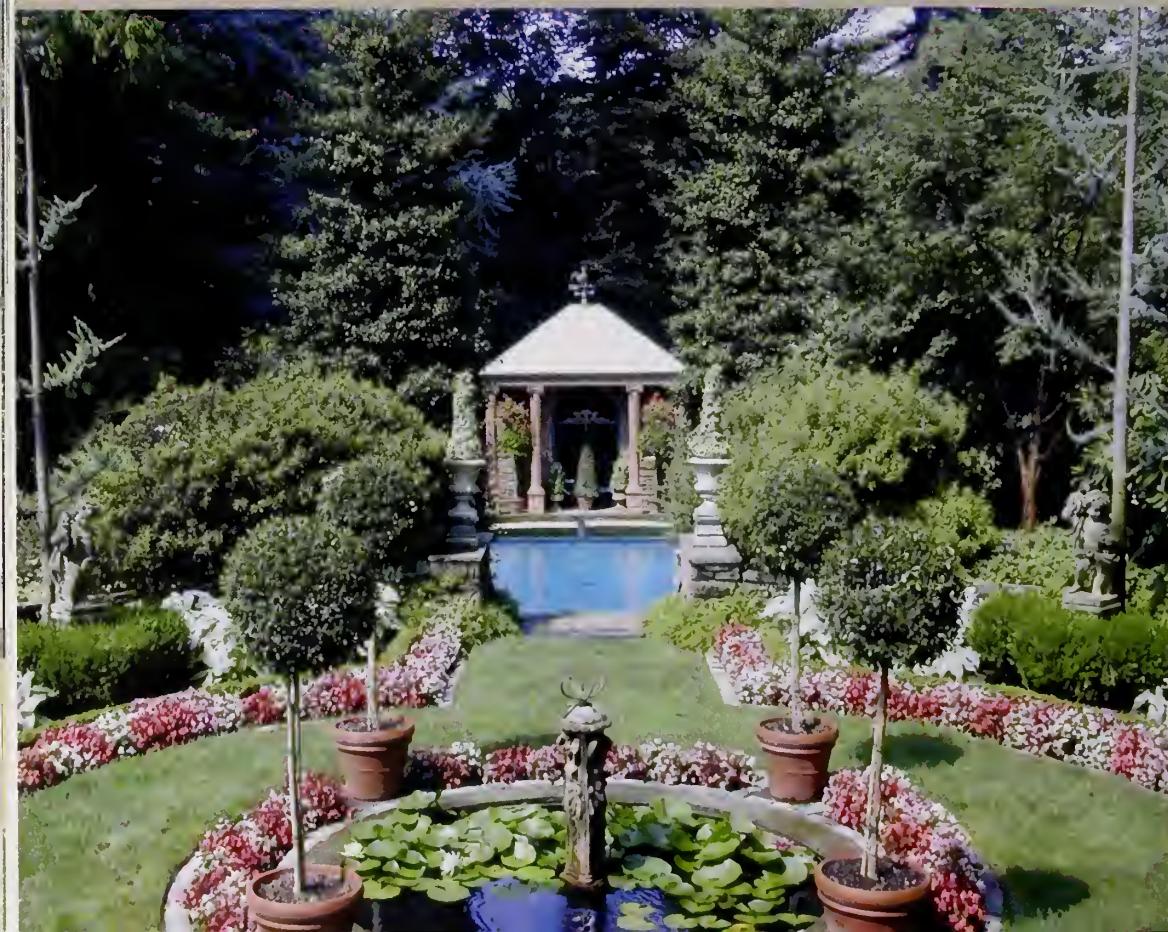
Come Visit the
Newest Addition to
the PHS Family



Above left: A
scarlet *Gloxinia* in
the shop.

Left: The formal
gardens (available
for viewing on pre-
booked group
tours).

Opposite page:
A glimpse of the
main house.



Jessica Story

Meadowbrook Farm



Nestled in a wooded corner of Abington Township, just north of Philadelphia in Montgomery County, sits Meadowbrook Farm, the charming estate of the late Mr. & Mrs. J. Liddon Pennock, Jr.

Mr. Pennock was a longtime PHS supporter and advisor to the Flower Show; upon his death last July, he bequeathed the entire Meadowbrook property—including the house, grounds and wonderful retail nursery—to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society for use "in accordance with the mission and goals of the Society." Let's find out more about this new member of the PHS family.

BEHIND THE SCENES. For nine months, a sub-committee of the PHS Council worked long and hard to analyze the bequest. At a Council meeting on Wednesday, April 21st, the committee recommended accepting the gift, noting that Meadowbrook Farm fits with the PHS mission, which is *to motivate people to improve the quality of life and to create a sense of community through horticulture*. The Council unanimously accepted this recommendation.

John Story, Meadowbrook's general manager for 16 years, will remain in this position and will work with a newly formed Meadowbrook Committee, composed of PHS volunteers and





Meadowbrook's yard sales manager Andrew McCourt watering pansies for sale in the shop.

staff members, that will be charged with guiding the operations at Meadowbrook. Under John's guidance, Meadowbrook Farm will continue to offer a wide range of specialty plants in its retail areas. In addition, it will continue as an important venue for forcing plants for the Philadelphia Flower Show. John and his staff have a reputation

for growing high-quality and unusual plants for prize-winning Show exhibits, including Meadowbrook's.

TOURS & SHOPPING DELIGHTS. A major draw to Meadowbrook for many years has been its small yet stellar nursery and retail shop. From pansies to specialty succulents, begonias and tropicals, there's something for everyone.

Says John Story, "We have traditional bedding plants, such as annual geraniums and container plants. But we also have rare specimens for serious horticulture lovers and even world-traveling plant hunters. For example, many nurseries have 20 or so varieties of succulent plants. We have about 150 different specimens of succulents alone, which shows you how much depth we have in our offerings. We have a few plants that can even make experts say, 'Wow—where did you find that?'"

For many years, the staff at Meadowbrook has also offered guided group tours of the beautiful formal gardens, as well as horticultural classes and workshops for PHS members. These activities will continue, as will pre-booked group tours through the first floor of the Pennock residence. Indeed, there's plenty to do at Meadowbrook Farm.

The shop at Meadowbrook.



REMEMBERING AN OLD FRIEND. "Liddon was a dear friend to PHS," says president Jane Pepper, "and we are delighted that he chose to leave his property to the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. We welcome the opportunity to continue Liddon's vision at Meadowbrook and to use Meadowbrook to enhance the Society's mission."

On a further note, Gail Weilheimer, commissioner of Ward 1 in Abington, noted that the Township and especially Meadowbrook's neighbors "look forward to welcoming the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to the neighborhood." 

Meadowbrook Farm is located at 1633 Washington Lane in Meadowbrook, PA. Phone number is 215-887-5900. Its hours are 10 am to 5 pm, Monday through Saturday year round, with extended spring hours.

The website—which includes directions—is www.meadowbrook-farm.com. And for upcoming PHS events at Meadowbrook, visit www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org and click on "Calendar."

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TREE AND SHRUB SURVIVAL

101

Story by Joe Ziccardi,
Pennsylvania Certified
Horticulturist

"Why did my plant die?" We've all asked this question at our local garden centers at least once. "I didn't do anything wrong," we think to ourselves, all in a vain attempt to put the blame anywhere but where it mostly likely belongs. In the majority of cases of plants that flat-line—though we all cringe to admit it—it's usually human error that's the culprit.

Fortunately, there are some fundamental ways to keep your green thumb, well...green. Let's look at some basic tips on how to conquer the wacky world of woody plants.

Shrubs and perennial border (Pottmeyer Garden, Wexford, PA)



Start with Quality Plants

The old adage "you get what you pay for" applies here. Like most people, I can't resist a good deal on trees and shrubs and occasionally find myself rooting through the bargain bin at my local nursery. On the down side, these plants are almost never guaranteed, and, if you don't know what you're getting, they're usually more trouble than they are worth.

Most of the time, though, I shop for plants like I shop for fresh vegetables, choosing healthy, fresh-looking specimens with no leaf blemishes or broken, damaged wood. If a plant looks healthy, it probably is. Furthermore, I buy quality plants from reputable nurseries that guarantee their stock.

To ensure a quality selection, look for PHS Gold Medal Plants. The Gold Medal Award program promotes woody plants of outstanding quality and merit. For more information, as well as a list of plants and nurseries that sell them, take a tour of the website, www.goldmedalplants.com.

Location, Location, Location

Almost all plants have specific requirements for sunlight, and they are labeled by the grower or retailer as needing full sun, part sun (part shade) or shade. It's crucial to observe the light exposure of your landscape as the sun changes its position throughout the day. *Full sun* is at least six hours of direct sunlight. *Part sun* is about four hours of direct sun or bright, dappled light all day, and *shade* means no direct sunlight. Be wary of that summer shady spot. That shade can turn into full sun in the winter, when deciduous trees providing summer shade lose their leaves, and damage your shade-loving plants.

Fortunately, some plants thrive in almost any light conditions. Boxwood (*Buxus 'Green Velvet'*), Japanese plum yew (*Cephalotaxus harringtoniana 'Prostrata'*), and oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia 'Snow Queen'*) are a few Gold Medal plants that can tolerate a variety of light conditions.

Of course, light is not the only consideration when choosing the right spot for your plant. Environmental conditions such as soil type, moisture, and exposure to wind all affect plant health. A little detective work before planting can save you time and money. Maybe you need something that's

deer resistant or that can tough it out in the big city. Maybe you want to go native or need a plant that can handle really wet (or dry) conditions (see sidebar).

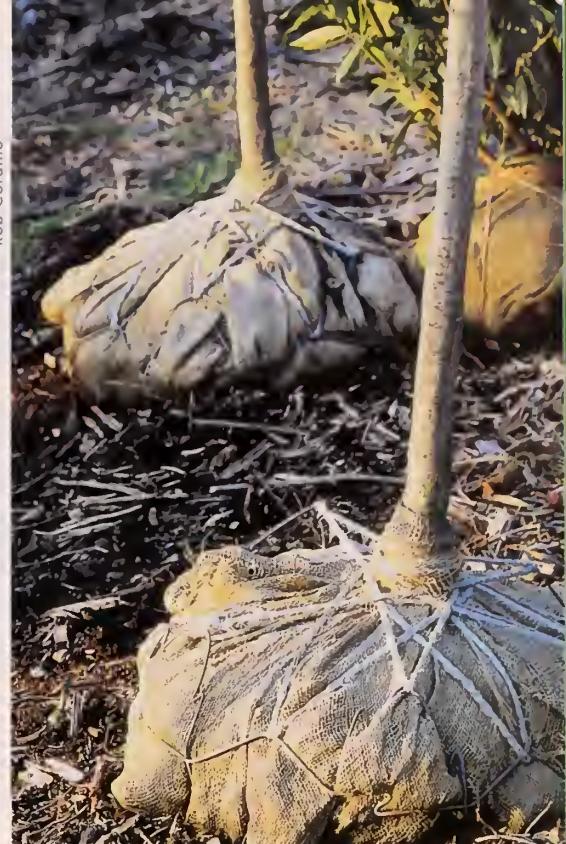
Digging a Hole

Once you've chosen the right location, it's time to start digging. Dig your planting hole twice the diameter of the plant's container and a little deeper. Create a mixture using half the soil you dug up and some good planting soil and add some of this mixture to the hole. Remove the pot and then either separate or untangle the roots (especially if the plant is pot-bound). Place the plant in the hole, keeping the top layer of soil level with the ground. Remove as much burlap, string or wire as possible, as any materials left on the root ball can hamper proper root development.

For trees six feet or higher, do not dig much deeper than the container or ball. The weight of a large tree will cause it to sink down in an over-dug hole, meaning that the tree you thought you planted at the proper depth might end up being too deep. To prevent this, it is better to plant a bit high and allow for settling.

In fact, planting just about any tree or shrub too deep is a slow death sentence. Roots and stems are made of specialized tissue with specific functions. Covering up the stems or trunk above the flare (the swollen area where the base of the trunk

Rob Cardillo

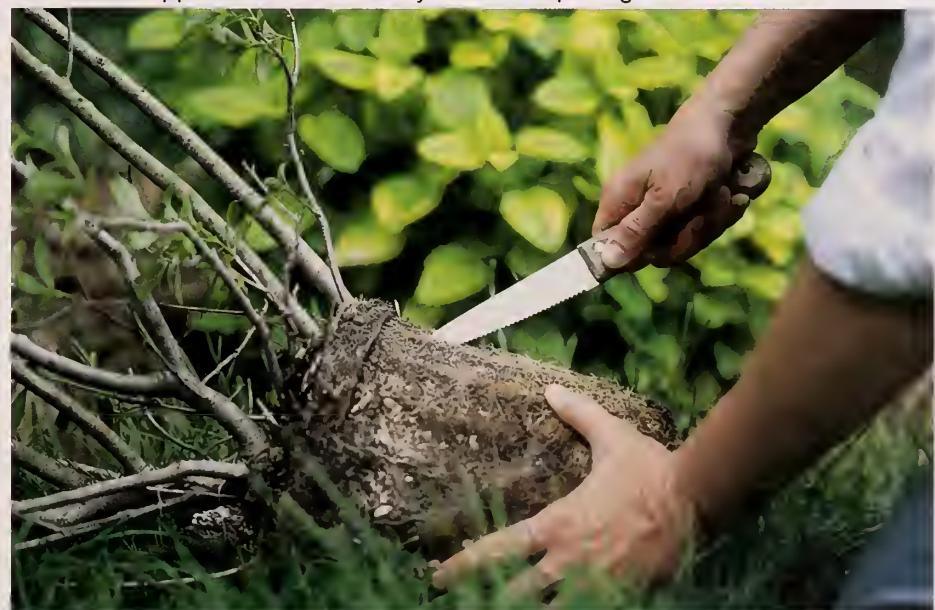


meets the root system) creates problems that weaken the plant and eventually cause its demise.

The Art of Watering

Improper watering is probably the single most common cause of death for new plantings. Under-watering is a major cause of plant stress, yet it's rare for a newly planted tree or shrub to suffer from "over-watering." However, over-watering occurs when

Above: Burlapped trees at a nursery. **Below:** Splitting a rootball with a knife.



Rob Cardillo

Gold Medal Plants demonstrate exceptional adaptability to various cultural and environmental conditions. Choosing the right plant for the right spot increases the chance of success in your garden.

Drought Tolerant Plants

Acer buergerianum (Trident Maple)



Aronia arbutifolia 'Brilliantissima'
(Red Chokeberry)



Cephalotaxus harringtonia 'Prostrata'
(Japanese Plume Yew)



Cornus mas 'Golden Glory'
(Cornelian Cherry Dogwood)



Cornus sericea 'Silver and Gold'
(Yellowtwig Dogwood)



Itea virginica 'Henry's Garnet'
(Sweetspire)



Juniperus virginiana 'Corcoran'

Emerald Sentinel™
(Eastern Red Cedar)



Parrotia persica (Persian Ironwood)



Physocarpus opulifolius
'Diabolo' Diabolo™ (Eastern Ninebark)



Syringa reticulata 'Ivory Silk'
(Japanese Tree Lilac)



Zelkova serrata 'Green Vase'



Wet-Site Tolerant Plants

Aronia arbutifolia 'Brilliantissima'
(Red Chokeberry)



Betula nigra 'Heritage'
(River Birch)



Cornus sericea 'Silver and Gold'
(Yellowtwig Dogwood)



Clethra alnifolia 'Hummingbird'
(Summersweet)



Clethra alnifolia 'Ruby Spice'
(Summersweet)



Ilex glabra 'Densa'
(Inkberry Holly)



Ilex 'Harvest Red'
(Winterberry Holly)



Ilex verticillata 'Scarlett O'Hara'
(Winterberry)



Ilex verticillata 'Winter Red'
(Winterberry)



Itea virginica 'Henry's Garnet'
(Sweetspire)



Metasequoia glyptostroboides

Dawn Redwood)



Thuja 'Green Giant'
(Giant Arborvitae)



deer resistant urban tolerance native plant



soon as the soil is workable and again in the fall around Thanksgiving. Avoid the overuse of water-soluble plant foods, which can leach into the water table and do nothing for overall plant nutrition.

Pest Prevention

Pest control on woody plants is another vast topic, full of ranging opinions and constantly changing methodology. But all agree that quick diagnoses and treatment of the insect or disease problem is crucial.

The longer a plant has a pest problem, the harder it is to treat the cause. The plant weakens and stress increases as it fights for life. Examine your plants on a regular basis. Look for clusters of insects, usually near the growing tips. Spotting, discoloration or fading leaves are other indications of a possible trouble. Take a sample of the suspected plant to your local garden center for a speedy diagnosis and treatment.

Take Your Garden to Bed

Planting a tree or shrub somewhere out in the yard by itself is just plain unnatural. There's little protection from the elements and a weekly brush with the lawn mower can be detrimental to that plant's health. Like most people, plants like to live near each other. Besides, you can create a beautiful look with a tree, a couple of shrubs, and some bedding plants in a prepared bed. It's a little more work than digging one hole and dropping in that oak tree, but the results are much more rewarding.

Mulching & Fertilizing

One of the most common and obvious landscaping mistakes is mounding large quantities of mulch around a tree (see photo, pg. 11). This has the same negative effect on a tree as planting too deep. Over-mulching causes root rot, fungus, and other problems. The proper depth for mulch is two to four inches and it should not touch the trunk.

Fertilizing woody plants is a topic that can fill volumes. But, in a nutshell, use a good quality plant food that's at least partially organic. Organic fertilizers break down slowly and contribute to soil quality. Fertilize twice a year, once in the spring as

Don't Stress It

With plants, declining health and death can often be traced back to one thing: stress. Every wrong thing we do to a plant causes stress—from under-watering to excessive mulching to potty visits from your favorite pooch. Just like humans, stressed-out plants become weak and susceptible to a host of "colds" and other diseases. By following these simple guidelines, you can reduce the stress of your plants and assure success in your garden.

Joe Ziccardi is the Gold Medal Coordinator at PHS.

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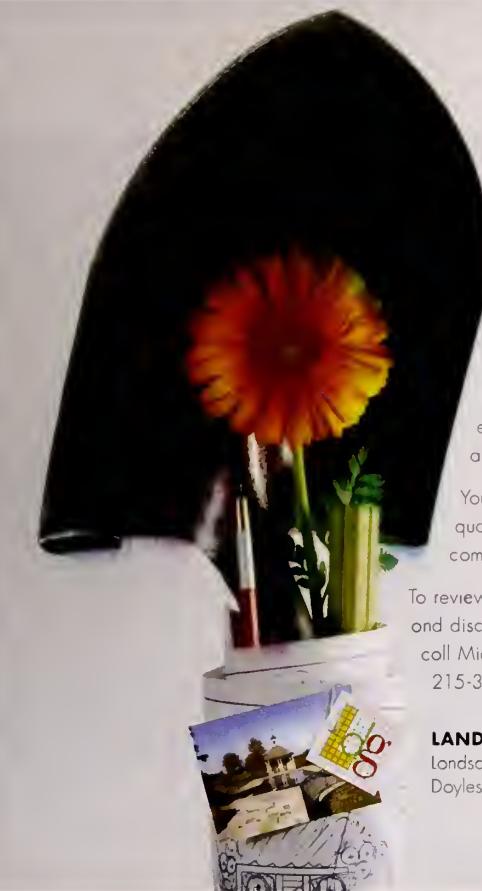
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Spots, Splashes, Dots and Dashes

When it comes to variegated plants, gardeners tend to have very definite opinions. Some are avid collectors and eagerly search out the latest variegated offerings, regardless of what the plants actually look like. Others approve of some types of variegation (a crisp white leaf edge being a common favorite), while looking askance at mottles, streaks, and other patterns.

Then there are those who avoid variegates altogether, often on the principle that the plants are sick-looking. Admittedly, irregular or streaky variegation is a classic symptom of some viruses, and sometimes it's hard to tell perfectly healthy variegates from infected ones. But in most cases, foliage patterns are caused by natural changes within the plants themselves, and you can grow them with no fear (or hope) of their variegation "spreading" to other plants in your garden.

I say "hope" because variegated-plant fanatics are only too happy for new foliage markings to appear unbidden in their gardens. Sharp-eyed gardeners are always on the lookout for these genetic mutations, called "sports," which they nurture and then attempt to propagate. Sometimes the plants outgrow the variegated parts and return to being all green; in other cases, they produce multiple shoots with varying degrees of variegation. Repeatedly taking cuttings from the best variegated shoots can help stabilize the markings, leading to a plant that's reliably and uniformly variegated—an enthusiast's dream (and possibly a money-making new introduction as well)!

Nancy Ondra



A melange of pulmonaria, plectranthus, hellebore, clethra, and a variegated geranium.

For most of us, of course, the pleasure of variegated plants is more about the thrill of growing something different, as well as about the exciting design opportunities they provide. Set among plain green companions, variegates make undeniably striking accent plants. They also work well as building blocks for creating eye-catching combinations. Like other types of colorful foliage, variegates are showy through much, if not all, of the growing season. When using variegates in combinations, though, be aware that the intensity of variegation can vary according to the season. With some plants, the variegation is most pronounced in spring and fades by summer; in a few cases, the plant starts out mostly green and develops more variegation as the season progresses. Colors can also change: Yellow markings may age to cream, while cream-colored markings can change to pure white by summer.

You'll often hear that you shouldn't grow two or more variegated plants next to each other. Like all other design rules, this one is made to be broken, depending

on the plants and the site. To my eye, variegates work best where you can see them up close, so you don't need large masses of one type; using several different variegates that contain the same colors (blue and white, for instance, or green and yellow) can unify a design without appearing "over the top."

When you're siting multicolored cultivars, keep in mind that white- and cream-variegated plants seem to prefer a bit more shade than their plain green versions, while yellow-marked plants typically prefer full sun. If your variegated leaves look brown or scorched, they probably need more shade; if they lose most or all of their markings by mid-summer, they may need a bit more light. And if you spot any all-green shoots among the variegated ones, be sure to pinch or snip out the unmarked ones right away; otherwise, their more-vigorous growth can quickly take over, leaving you with a plain green plant—and where's the fun in that? 

Nancy J. Ondra is a freelance garden writer who lives in Bucks County, PA. She has written several books including *Grasses: Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design* (Storey Books).



Longing for Lavender

A few years ago, it seemed everyone wanted to combine lavender flowers with chartreuse. The cool shades of blue and lavender are presumed to be calming and comforting. If those qualities appeal to you, here are some award-winning annuals with flowers in shades of lavender.

Agastache foeniculum 'Golden Jubilee' sports chartreuse foliage and intensely colored lavender blue, spike-like flowers. It comes into bloom in mid to late summer when few perennials are in flower. An aromatic herb and member of the mint family, the serrated foliage of this annual agastache releases a refreshing mint fragrance when crushed or brushed. It is a tidy plant at 20 inches high and 15 inches wide, and it is easily grown in sun or part shade. This plant was named to commemorate the 50-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

A great number of vigorously blooming petunias have come on the scene in the last few years. With a distinctly different violet blue and white bicolor, *Petunia multiflora 'Merlin Blue Morn'* won the All America Selection (AAS) award in the 2003 trials. The blossoms on 'Merlin Blue Morn' are 2-1/2 inches in diameter and, as stated in the AAS website description, they are "pure white in the center with a soft transition to velvety blue on the edge."

Like the popular Wave Petunias and the Supertunias, 'Merlin Blue Morn' also spreads to 30 inches. These petunias are all quite popular because they do not need to be cut back once in the landscape. They recover quite well from rain damage to the flowers, are self cleaning, and bloom continuously. The mature height of 'Merlin Blue Morn' is 15 to 20 inches, a height which may be more useful than the 2-inch height of some of the Wave Petunias for garden beds. Full sun and frequent fertilization keep the plants covered in bloom until frost.

Another lavender-flowered plant, *Phlox 'Intensia Lavender Glow'*, is part of a new annual phlox series and is consid-



Meg Green



Marilyn Romenesko



Skogil Gardens

ered by many to be superior to the *Phlox dummondii* or annual phlox of the past. To start, it is rated very highly for its ability to flower continuously through the heat and humidity of summer. Secondly, this phlox forms a dense uniform mound in the garden where it reaches a height of 12 inches. It can be used in combination plantings or in a container, where it attains some height but also cascades gracefully over the edge of the container. Lastly, it is quite free-blooming and will be virtually covered in bloom for months in either sun or part shade.

This annual phlox prefers well-drained soil and likes to be fertilized twice a week when grown in beds, and once a week when grown in pots. Other colors in this series, also top-rated performers, are 'Intensia Lilac Rose' and 'Intensia Neon Pink'.

Phlox 'Intensia Lavender Glow' is part of the Proven Winners line of plants that are selected and tested to have reliable performance for both the grower and the consumer. According to their website, "Only the most colorful, fastest growing, versatile, and vigorous plants are selected to bear the Proven Winners label."

Agastache foeniculum 'Golden Jubilee' and *Petunia 'Merlin Blue Morn'* are winners of both the AAS and Fleuroselect Awards (the latter is an international organization for the testing, protecting, and promoting of new flower varieties).

These lovely lavender-blossomed annual plants offer months of color and

vigorous growing. Best of all, they have proven themselves in other people's gardens. If you are longing for lavender flowers in your summer plantings, you can plant these annuals with confidence since they have a great record of garden performance. ~

A project manager for PHS's Philadelphia Green program,

Marilyn Romenesko is a trained horticulturist and ISA-certified arborist.

She gardens avidly in Wilmington, Delaware.



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Classifieds



Before

Death of a Driveway

Story and photos by
Pete Brown



During



After

In car-crazy America, the thought of tearing out one's driveway seems ludicrous, even unpatriotic, especially if it's a much-vaunted "circular drive." But for one Delaware County homeowner, the choice was simple—since there was no other level area for lawn and gardens on the property, the circular driveway had *to go*.

Standing in the way of the project were several 70-foot ash trees that grew within the driveway circle, blocking out much of the light. In order to eventually realize a sunny front lawn and garden, these behemoths also had to go. The homeowner contacted a landscape contractor called

Total Maintenance Services, which was able to tackle the job last fall. On a breezy November day, company co-owner Jon Fazekas scaled up the trees with his climbing gear and, like David battling Goliath, took the giants down one by one. The logs and branches were then either put into a chipper or hauled off in a dumptruck.

In further consultation with this contractor, the homeowner learned that the company also did all manner of landscape projects, so he inquired about his driveway-removal dreams. In short order, Jon came up with a plan to remove half the driveway. He and his crew would jackhammer up the driveway, which he said they would then crumble into small chunks easy for disposal in a dumpster. Then the driveway's rocky sub-layer would have to come up, as grass or other plants wouldn't be able to set roots in it. Truckloads of topsoil would then be brought for a Bobcat loader to grade the area level (but sloping slightly away from the house to prevent flooding problems). Finally, the area would be sowed with grass seed, stabilizing it until the homeowner decided on his gardening needs down the road.

On Day One, the driveway was swiftly removed in a few hours, filling up one enormous industrial dumpster (roughly 20 x 10 x 5 feet). There was so much debris that another giant dumpster had to be brought in. Day Two was pure landscape work: bringing in soil, grinding up a few of the old ash-tree stumps, and leveling the soil to make a pleasing, flat surface. Finally, the soil was seeded with two kinds of grass—a fast-germinating ryegrass and longer-lived bluegrass. The seeded earth was also lightly mulched with straw to help retain moisture and protect the forthcoming grass seedlings.

Fortunately, the "Lawn Gods" were clearly smiling on the homeowner. Unlike the desert-dry spring of 2002, the spring of 2003 was extremely wet—perfect for sprouting a new lawn. Within a few weeks, the homeowner was happily mowing his grass and planning the garden beds to come.

Jon Fazekas stopped by to see how his project came out. All was well. But after the owner gushed about his burgeoning list of lawn-related projects, Jon humorously shot back, "Well, I'm glad you're enjoying it. At my house, I don't want any trees or grass. This is what I do all day—lawn work is the *last thing* I want to do when I get home at night." 



Lychnis x arkwrightii 'Orange Gnome'

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Welcome to the world of heirloom dahlias. In the garden of William Woys Weaver, you'll find varieties over 50 years old, some dating to the Victorian and Edwardian eras. From his oldest specimen, 'Union Jack' (dating back to 1882) to the relatively new kid on the block, 'Kidd's Climax' (1940), there are vintage dahlias for all settings and fascinating tales behind them all.

16 Making the Secret Garden

It seems like every year, our region gets a little more crowded. There's more traffic, more noise, more everything. It can even be tough to find a little peace and quiet in our gardens, where we often retreat to get away from all the hub-bub. Thankfully, Ilene Sternberg's got some helpful tips for transforming our backyards and gardens into private havens that turn the volume down a bit and soften the edges of the outside world.

24 The Sweet Smell of Clethra

Ab, these are the dog days of summer, and you'll find many a fine gardener withering on the proverbial vine. But Patricia Taylor has a magic potion: *Clethra*. Commonly known as summersweet or sweet pepperbushes, these fragrant beauties will lift the droopiest of spirits.

30 Gardening Outside the Box

Are you looking to do something...well, *different* with your garden? Feeling like you're in a rut? Tried of the same gardening tricks? Sometimes it helps to throw out the traditional rules and look at your landscape with fresh eyes. As Fran Sorin shows us, your garden can be a fantastic laboratory of "mad" science, where mistakes nuture knowledge, happy accidents inspire new directions, and innovation leads to enlightenment.

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover photos by Pete Prown (Weaver garden).

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GREEN scene

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Here Comes Members' Day 2004

Despite the intermittent rain, about 1,300 people came to the first annual PHS Members Day last September, turning a wet day into a hit event for members of all ages. Why did they come out on such a day? Some came for the Annual Plant Dividend, some came for the educational lectures, and many more came to spend time with their fellow PHS members. In all, it was a grand kick-off to this new member benefit.

I particularly recall Members' Day because we had just purchased a digital camera at the office and I was taking it on its maiden voyage. While a fair amount of my time was spent figuring out the camera's endless array of bells 'n' whistles, I did manage to capture a few snapshots, several seen here. As you can see, the weather had no impact on our members' enthusiasm, nor that of their children, who loved the kids' events.

Rain or shine, the 2004 event will be held on September 18th from 11am to 6pm, again at the Philadelphia Naval Business Center, located just off I-95 in South Philadelphia (near the Wachovia Center). There's plenty of free parking, too, so you can easily bring home your new plant treasures. So come out and enjoy Members' Day 2004. For more information and directions, visit our website at www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalociety.org.

Pete Brown

email: greenscene@pennhort.org



Above: A young visitor happily holds up a seed-covered bird treat that he's just made.



Above: Members flock around the Gold Medal Plant tent.

Left: A distant view of the event at the Naval Business Center.



Native Plants and 9-Year-Olds

Above:
Mr. Mendell's
third-grade
class in
"The Pennsylvania
Garden." At right
are garden
volunteers Sarah
Roberts and
Barbara Blake.

A special garden is growing at the Wallingford Elementary School in Delaware County. Known as "The Pennsylvania Garden," this former macadam patch was razed for a bit of paradise, specifically, one comprised of plants native to the Keystone State.

"I call it my second classroom," says third-grade teacher Dave Mendell, known for instilling a love of poetry in his students. "Starting in March, we like to come out here and write observations in our journals. For science, this is where we come

to learn about bees and pollen. In May, we host our Young Authors Day out here, with a garden party theme."

A cranberry viburnum hedge defines the edges of the Pennsylvania Garden. Native honeysuckles twine up the pole of a birdhouse, and plantings are labeled for educational value: American hollies (*Ilex opaca*), hydrangeas, cranesbills (*Geranium* sp.), and spiderwort (*Tradescantia* sp.).

Interestingly, the two parents who oversee the gardens are also Pennsylvania

natives: Sarah Roberts is from Mechanicsburg, while Barbara Blake was born and raised in Abington. Both are astute gardeners and also enjoy cultivating a sense of community among the children. Gazing with a critical eye, however, Barbara notes, "The creeping Jenny and fohergilla together can just look like weeds. We need to make this garden more colorful." Since

Pennsylvania's climate zone is hardly tropical, showy native plants are a rarity. And therein lies the challenge.

When the Providence Garden Club gave a \$2,500 grant to establish the garden in the late 1990s, it specified that all plantings be native to Pennsylvania, though one or two non-natives have snuck in over the years. J. Franklin Styer Nurseries of Concordville, PA, donated many plants to get things started, and the school holds an annual plant sale to help fund further purchases. For help in making selections, Blake and Roberts turn to Redbud Nursery in Delaware County. And, says Roberts, "We definitely seek out knowledgeable parents."

Milling around the garden, Mr.

Mendell's students examine and exclaim. One is fond of the rustic birdhouse "because it looks like a little cabin." Another appreciates the buttercups "because they brighten up the place." And a third, sounding like a budding Philadelphia Flower Show judge, says "I like the American holly and the bleeding hearts sitting together because they look like friends."

Oblivious to which plants truly are native to Pennsylvania and which are mere pretenders, these Pennsylvania schoolchildren simply appreciate the beauty in their midst. 

—Jennifer Reynolds



Above: The children sit in the garden, writing poetry for class.

Inset: Wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*).



Last summer, I was fortunate to be a guest at a privately owned chateau in central France. The Chateau de Scorbe-Clairvaux is the real McCoy, in fact. Constructed during the 13th to 15th centuries, it has 3-foot-thick limestone walls, a moat encircling it and *parterre* gardens once tended by Andre le Notre, the great landscape designer who made the gardens of Versailles and Vaux le Vicomte. Being a landscape architect, this was hallowed ground to me.

When I discovered my 83-year-old host, Roland Caude, mowing the lawn one morning, I offered to pitch in and finish the job, but I actually had a loftier goal. In the middle of the front lawn was a truly enormous columnar yew (*Taxus x media* 'Hicksii' or similar), which the family calls the "candelabra tree" for its deeply pendulous branches. Known to have been planted in the late 1700s, this "bush" was 30 feet

Above right: The author (right) at work with his host.

Right: The 200-year-old yew during the pruning process.

Landscaping with History

high, perhaps 40 feet across. The family often set up tables underneath it to accommodate 16 for dinner.

Large as it was, pruning was clearly needed; it had probably not been touched for decades. The candelabra shape was visible, but a judicious shaping would reveal it so much better. My hosts were understandably wary of this vacationing American who wanted to cut their tree.

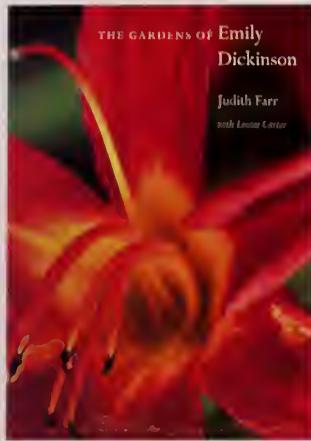
But the lawn mowing had laid the foundation, and over cocktails each evening our discussions slowly focused on the pruning job ahead. Another morning, I further won their confidence by pruning the many suckers from a bosque of pollarded linden trees, which had detracted from the formal appearance of the grove.

It worked. Finally, I was allowed to help prune the 200-year-old yew. Using simple

hand saws from dusty rooms of the chateau, we carefully removed a few large branches that drooped to the ground and fine-pruned smaller branches that obscured the tree's lower structure. The bloodiest part was over in an hour or two. Finally, with the candelabra restored, I relaxed on vacation knowing this important specimen had received the care it needed. To me, it was nothing short of a horticultural honor.

—Andy Durham, RLA





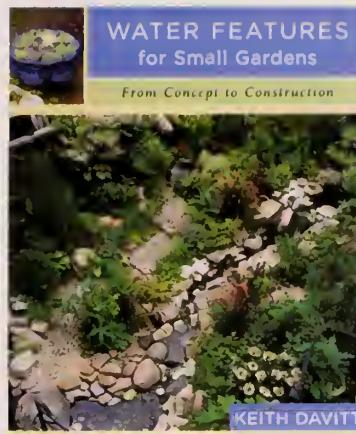
The Gardens of Emily Dickinson
By Judith Farr, with Louise Carter
(Harvard Univ. Press, 2004,
350 pages, \$26.95)

Now considered one of the greatest nineteenth-century American poets, the reclusive Emily Dickinson—unpublished until after her death—was perhaps better known in her lifetime as a passionate and knowledgeable gardener. In this scholarly book, Judith Farr explores what she calls Dickinson's avocation and the way her intimate knowledge of plants shaped her work, which abounds with images from the garden. By exploring Dickinson's work in the context of her life in the garden and conservatory, Farr offers a deeper understanding of this beloved poet, as well as her artistic and cultural influences.

As an added bonus for gardeners, the final chapter, contributed by Philadelphia-area horticulturist Louise Carter, shows how Dickinson's gardening tastes had more in common with today's cottage garden designs than with the formal gardens of her Victorian milieu. Using information culled from Dickinson's letters, notes and herbarium (a book of pressed flower specimens), memoirs of her contemporaries, and analysis of the grounds of the Dickinson "homestead" in Amherst, Massachusetts—where Emily lived her entire life—Carter suggests how you might create your own "Dickinsian" garden.

The book also includes wonderful illustrations, extensive notes, an appendix listing plants grown by the poet, and an index of poems cited in the text. It's surely a must-have for gardeners and poetry lovers alike.

—Jane Carroll



Water Features for Small Gardens
by Keith Davitt
(Timber Press, 174 pages, \$29.95)

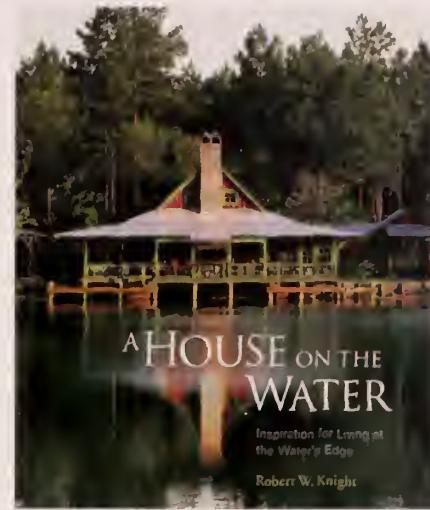
There are many books on water gardening already in print, but this one emerges from the pack because it embraces the notion of "small gardens for busy people"—a hot topic in the garden universe these days.

Author Keith Davitt offers a wealth of information, showing us how to install smaller water features, from the informal to the formal, not to mention streams, bogs, container ponds and waterfalls. He also supplies straightforward information about the tools, accessories and process of pond installation, all presented in a clear manner.

The big plus with this book is its ample supply of color photos. These will help you decide whether you want a naturalistic grotto or a formal reflecting pond for your property. Davitt closes the book with a chapter on horticulture and does a good, basic job covering the popular water lilies, grasses, and margin plants.

Don't be* put off by the \$30 pricetag—there's a lot of excellent information in this small-format book.

—Pete Prown



A House on the Water
by Robert W. Knight
(Taunton Press, 218 pages, \$34.95)

While not a gardening book, per se, *A House on the Water* gives one plenty of ideas about landscaping and house siting. Contained within its pages are a number of drop-dead gorgeous houses and interiors from those "dream houses" we all think about from time to time, be it on the ocean or a secluded mountain lake (I'll take the latter, thank you).

As an "idea book," though, this coffee-table edition offers gardeners tantalizing visions on how to use interior windows to frame and capture superb views of water, trees and other landscape elements. This kind of conceptual-design thinking is intriguing, whether you're lazing on your Poconos vacation or sitting at home in the Philadelphia suburbs. Porches and decks are also included, which are platforms specifically made for looking at nature—something which is all too often forgotten.

Still, you may just want to gaze longingly at the architectural wonders within. If nothing else, this is surely a book to dream by. 

—Pete Prown

Heirloom Dahlias

Forgotten Treasures of the Garden



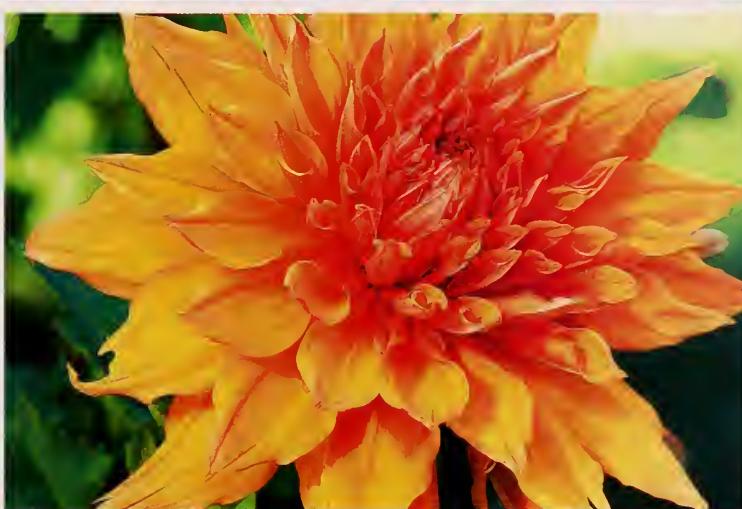
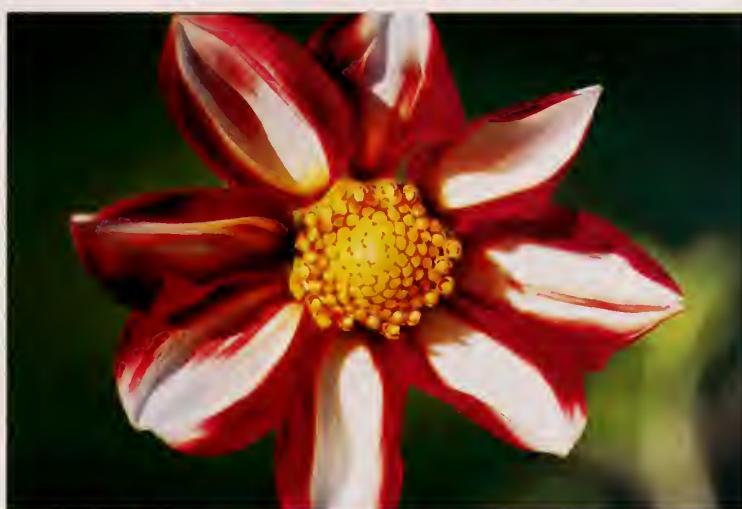
Story by William Woys Weaver
Photographs by Pete Prown and John Gannon

Many passions start with unexpected gifts, and I must confess, my present adventure with heirloom dahlias began with a single tuber several years ago. It was brought to me by Oreste Flagella, who had worked in the 1920s and 1930s as a gardener for Suzanne Wister Fuguet (later Eastwick), the owner of Roughwood, the house where I now live. Oreste maintained the dahlia long after he stopped working on the property but did not know its name. Its rich port-wine color was a favorite of his (the same color as the modern dahlia called 'Imperial Wine'), and the flecks and streaks of mauve and lilac in the petals were indeed unusual.

I still do not know the name of that dahlia, but in my quest to identify it, I stumbled on a whole world of old-time dahlias very much ignored by gardeners until recently. I am happy to say there is now a healthy revival in old dahlia varieties under way, due in part to the publications of dahlia expert Martin Kral and to the tireless enthusiasm of Scott Kunst of Old House Gardens in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Of all the 200-plus varieties of dahlias I now grow, the unusual daintiness of the heirlooms has won my heart time and again. Granted, the term "heirloom" is slippery, but for the purposes of this survey, I have chosen dahlia varieties over 50 years old, some even dating to the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Many of the oldest heirlooms qualify as dainty, both in size and in their muted Victorian colors. Others are just so perfectly "there" in their continued decorative usefulness that they should not be ignored in any garden scheme. **'Bishop of Llandaff'** (1927) is near the top in this category. It is probably the easiest to find of all the heirloom dahlias because of its popularity.

'Kidd's Climax' (1940) is another. Dahlia expert Gareth



Right top to bottom:

- 'Nellie Broomhead'
- 'Union Jack'
- 'Sherwood's Peach'
- 'Master Michael'



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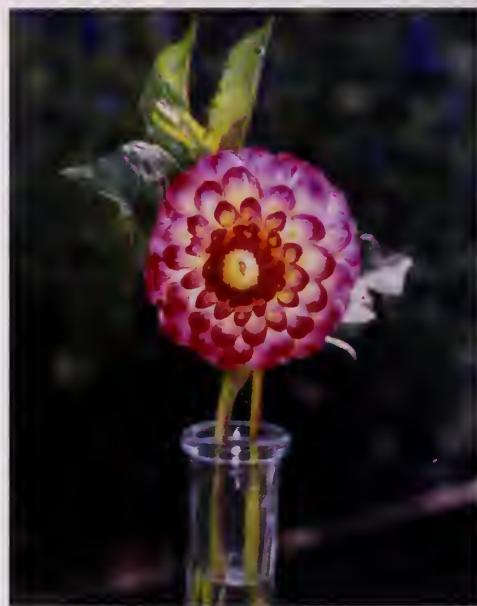


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Rowland even singled out 'Kidd's Climax' as one of the all-time greats of the exhibition varieties. There are others in this class, among them a ruby red cactus type called 'Juanita' (1949, not shown), which is still grown and admired all over the world.

Some of these dahlias have well-documented histories. 'Jersey's Beauty' emerged in 1921 on a country estate in Rumson, New Jersey. It was developed by William Waite, an estate gardener and amateur dahlia breeder. When the intensely pink dahlia was introduced commercially in 1923, it caused a sensation and nudged dahlia breeders all over the country in the direction of larger and showier flowers. In spite of many newer and more eye-catching varieties, 'Jersey's Beauty' still holds its own. The plants can reach 6 or 7 feet in height, so it is perfect as a background planting, especially since it flowers profusely and mixes well with other tall ornamentals, like white cosmos.

The best place to look for the oldest heirloom dahlias is Old House Gardens, which specializes in them. But that is not the only source.



My Favorite Heirlooms

Bishop of Llandaff (1927)

Dark burgundy foliage with almost single, scarlet-red flowers. 4 to 5 feet.

Edith Mueller (1933)

Profuse, soft yellow pompons edged with carmine. The carmine is most intense toward the center. 3 feet.

Jane Cowl (1928)

A dinner-plate type with drooping buff, bronze and gold petals. Color intensity is heavily influenced by weather conditions. Named for actress Jane Cowl (1883-1950). 5 feet.

Jersey's Beauty (1923)

Intense pink 4-to-6-inch flowers. 6 to 7 feet.

Kaiser Wilhelm (1892)

Striking soft yellow curled petals brushed with burgundy. 4 to 5 feet.

Kidd's Climax (1940)

Free-flowering dinner plate type with pink and creamy yellow petals. 3 to 4 feet.

Little Beeswings (1909)

A whimsical yellow pompon tipped with flame-red. 3 feet.

Master Michael (1931)

Golden orange pompon on foot-long stems. 3 feet.

Nellie Broomhead (1897)

Bright mauve pompon. A difficult color to photograph. 3 to 4 feet.

Sherwood's Peach (1944)

A dinner plate type with bronze, amber and peach petals. 4 to 5 feet.

Tommy Keith (1892)

A pompon type in deep burgundy red splashed with white. 3 feet.

Union Jack (1882)

Pinwheel single flowers with red and white. 2 to 3 feet.



Opposite page top:

'Jersey's Beauty'

Opposite page bottom:

'Kaiser Wilhelm'

Right top to bottom:

'Edith Mueller'

'Tommy Keith'

'Kidd's Climax'

'Bishop of Llandaff'



Above:
'Jane Cowl'

Below: The
author in his
garden.

I have listed several others at the end of this article. Just as publishing houses maintain backlists of books that are steady sellers, many dahlia nurseries do the same with heirlooms. Sometimes it takes a phone call, because not everything is listed in catalogs and some stocks are limited. Yet it is not surprising to find '**Edith Muellar**' (1933) or '**Sherwood's Peach**' (1944) in many commercial catalogs, and the list of extant 1920s and 1930s standbys is indeed a long one.

Unfortunately, when we go back to the era before that, especially for varieties pre-dating 1900, there are only a handful on record, at most four or five, and all of them are illustrated in this article. The very oldest, '**Union Jack**' (1882), is also one of my favorites. In my garden, it has thrown solid red and solid white sports, which I think may be reversions to the parent forms of the original cross. Finding pleasant surprises like that is part of the fun of growing these old dahlia varieties.

Aside from their unusual colors, I also like their independence. Heirloom dahlias do not need much pampering aside from sturdy staking. Furthermore, they adapt well to my demands as an organic gardener. I interplant vegetables and dahlias in my large kitchen garden, and I don't find that mix at all startling, since dahlia petals are edible. So are the tubers for that matter, which is why I never spray my plants. I do keep a sharp lookout for any problems that might develop, since they are susceptible to many of the same viruses and diseases that attack tomatoes and other vegetables nearby.

With their eye-catching colors, minimal demands and versatility, heirloom dahlias are hard to beat. Why not add a bit of history to your garden?

William Woys Weaver is the author of 12 books, including *100 Vegetables and Where They Came From* (Algonquin) and *Sauer's Herbal Cures* (Routledge).

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Quakertown, PA 18951
email: livesey@nni.com

Helen's Dahlias
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LANDSCAPING

Wasn't it Garbo who uttered the immortal line, "I *want* to be alone"? (Don't pretend you're too young to remember.) Is that how you feel when prancing around your personal paradise, trying to commune with nature? Well, good luck.

Privacy isn't easy to come by nowadays. One home overlooks another. Trucks thunder down a nearby road, weedwhackers and leaf blowers roar. My own neighbors run a daily lawnmower relay. What's more, an alarming percentage of them—accountants, frying-pan salespeople, their spouses and offspring—have taken up motorcycling. Welcome to Hell's Acres!

Can you protect and defend yourself from this assault on your domestic tranquility? With the use of fences, simple garden structures and greenery, a set of earplugs, and a handful of Xanax, there is hope.

Whether hiring a professional or doing the job yourself, first pinpoint the problems and determine your strategy. Walk around your domain. Can passersby observe your comings and goings? Do you and your neighbors see eye to eye—literally? (Ideally, in fact, invite yourself over to the neighbors and ask if you can hang out their top-floor windows. They'll be too stunned to refuse.) After determining what views to conceal and which nearby noisemakers could use some muffling, plans will take shape.



FOR PRIVACY

Story by Ilene Sternberg • Photographs by Rob Cardillo





THE BEST OFFENSE...

Suppose you have a pool, hot tub or spa that you'd like to be able to use anytime, day or night, in your bikini or even less. Or perhaps Janet Jackson is coming for a picnic. Your first line of defense is de-fence.

Most municipalities, in fact, require safety fencing around a pool. Some may even specify the height or type, which may limit your options. But a stone or brick wall, stockade fence or even a chain-link eyesore can become a garden asset. If the choice is yours, consider practicality and upkeep. A vinyl fence is maintenance-free compared to a wooden one, for instance. Make sure the divider is in keeping with the architectural integrity of your house and property. A split-rail fence may not suit a formal house, but a wrought iron fence offers little concealment. That's when plants play a role.

You can sit flower-filled urns or birdhouses atop a wall or fence post; mount a wall fountain that generates soothing, noise-muffling water music; twine vines or hang half-pots of greenery, weatherproof ornaments, or mirrors on your barricade.

Ilene Sternberg



Ilene Sternberg



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Left and Below:
Any combination of climbing plants, containers and sculpture can help shield a pool or lawn area.

A LIVING WALL

If you don't want the expense or *overtness* of a fence, you can create a living screen with a pleasing selection of shrubs, trees, and smaller plants, suited to the setting. A barrier of evergreens (planted in full sun for maximum growth) will remain an asset through four seasons. Ornamental grasses are another idea. Large, shade-loving shrubs for privacy include rhododendrons, clethra, hydrangea, and those seemingly indestructible laurels.

Planted at the proper distance, a dense row of shrubbery also acts as a windbreak and inhibits noise; shrubs are also wonderful bird habitats. A mixed border creates great eye appeal and will ensure against a total loss if there is a problem with one of the species. A fast-growing chain of for-

sythia or bridal-wreath spirea in a staggered arrangement provides a quick attractive fix. A natural-looking hedge of varying textures and shapes offering flowers, fruit, and fall color will enhance your landscape and your goal of establishing boundaries.

ROOM TO GROW

Fences, hedges, and other screens need not be relegated to the perimeter of your garden. Creating garden rooms (smaller gardens within a garden) can establish visual and sound obstacles as well as delightful intimate hideaways, perhaps even from your own irritating family members. Formal, clipped hedgerows are labor-intensive, but fitting for garden room walls and for defining property lines. They present a

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Bunting garden

controlled, geometric look in the landscape. They will need shearing at least twice a year. Arborvitae, cherry laurel, and boxwood are often used for formal hedging, but you can get more daring as long as you're willing to do the maintenance.

Potted plants can play a key role in your privacy plan, too. Place elevated containerized plants at poolside or surrounding your patio. Stage them in groupings, some on pedestals of varying heights and some at their feet, out of splash range. Use tall plants such as canna, cat tails, castor bean, or sunflowers. Large tubs of lotus will make you feel as if you are floating down the Nile, and their leaves shoot five feet into the air. Shrubs in tubs work well for cloistering, too.

If you have neighbors on a hill above your house or whose upper-floor windows overlook your little kingdom, consider overhead screening clothed with plants. Site a vine-covered pergola or a latticework canopy angled downward toward your fence to obscure their field of vision. Greenery-clad trellises and arbors provide relaxing shade and offer settings for furniture, hammocks, swings, outdoor showers,

hot tub or spa. Clematis, passionflower, and ivy work well (wisteria if your armature is especially sturdy), or quick-growing annual vines, such as cypress vine, morning glory, or moonflowers do nicely. A gazebo, awnings, or tent enclosures are other alternatives.

BEFORE YOU START

Be considerate of those neighbors on whom you are about to draw that leafy curtain. Pretend you like them. If your plans will affect them, discuss your intentions and reach an accord before putting a shovel to the soil. Don't block their sunlight or cause some other problem that will end up in Judge Judy's courtroom. Know exactly where your property margins are. Plant far enough inside so maturing shrubs won't encroach on the neighbor's territory and so you can maintain your hedge without being on the neighbor's land. If you no longer have the property survey map you received when you bought your house, have another survey done.

Also, check the location of underground wiring (gas, telephone, cable television,

electric, invisible dog fences) and water lines before you start. Call DigSafe, the national utility notification system (800-282-8555) for help. They will call your area utility companies to mark your lines. There may also be local ordinances and easements with which you must comply.

Two books supply many creative suggestions. Ironically, they both have the same title, *Creating Privacy in the Garden*. One was written by Julia Fogg and the other by Chuck and Barbara Crandall; I recommend either one. Or, hire a professional with innovative concepts, a reclusive bent and, perhaps, a vindictive personality to get those intrusive elements out of your life. We all need some quiet time alone to maintain the remnants of our sanity in this stressful world. Thoughtful preparation, a few good ideas, and informed decisions can offer security and solitude, so you can relax and enjoy your backyard sanctuary, hot tub haven, and private, peaceful garden. 

Ilene Sternberg last wrote about the Thyrum garden in the August, 2003 issue of *Green Scene* magazine.

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GROWING



Clethra alnifolia 'Ruby Spice'

AUGUST IS THE MONTH when gardeners in our area often weep. It is the time when stifling heat and humidity breed mildew and disease, insects and weeds flourish, perennials flop and look tired, and annuals require almost daily deadheading. Fortunately, I grow *Clethra alnifolia*—known commonly as summersweet or sweet pepperbush—to help me through this time of tribulation. Its beauty has enriched my Mid-Atlantic gardens for over a decade, and its intoxicating fragrance actually makes me look forward to this time of year.

Native from Maine to Florida, clethras are virtually maintenance-free, thriving in sun or shade, on the shore or in the mountains, and without the need for pruning, fertilizers, or pesticides. Though there are a large number of cultivars to choose from, all clethras feature an abundance of mid-to-late-summer blossoms that attract butterflies and other nectar-seeking insects.

Flower color ranges from creamy white to sultry pink and, in fall, the foliage turns a bright yellow. There is also a winter bonus, in the form of sculptural seed capsules that persist into spring and look handsome in dried arrangements.

On my property, neither deer nor rabbits like these deciduous shrubs.

Until the past 25 years or so, summer-

CLETHRRA

Story by Patricia A. Taylor

sweets were known as relatively tall plants, topping out at 6 feet or more. 'Rosea', introduced in 1906, was especially sought after because its buds are a dark pink rather than the more common white. Often sold as 'Pink Spires' today, its flowers fade to a blush white after opening.

In 1977, Richard Feist, a graduate intern working at Callaway Gardens in Georgia, saw a compact 3-foot-tall, white-flowered sweet pepperbush growing in a drainage ditch by Hummingbird Lake. He brought it to the attention of Callaway's director of horticulture, Fred Galle, who planted it on Callaway's grounds. Mr. Feist eventually named the plant 'Hummingbird', and both he and Galle spread the word throughout nurseries and arboreta about its merits, emphasizing its perfect size for mixed borders and small gardens. True to form, wherever it was grown, 'Hummingbird' collected accolades. In 1993 it was honored by the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association and, in 1994, it won a Gold Medal Award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

'Hummingbird' commercially appeared at a time when interest in native plants was surging. With this increased consumer interest, nurserymen took a closer look at the variations in clethras and found some truly great plants. For example, Andy Brand at Broken Arrow Nursery in Hamden, Connecticut, planted rows of 'Pink Spires' in 1992 with the hope of finding some plants bearing not only pink buds but pink flowers as well. When he spied a branch covered with reddish pink flowers on one shrub, he at first thought he had become intoxicated with the intense fragrance of the blossoms. A closer look revealed that this one branch, known as a "sport" in botanical terms, was indeed bear-

ing different-colored flowers. Vegetative production from this sport began immediately, resulting in a new plant called 'Ruby Spice'.

Growing up to 8 feet tall, 'Ruby Spice' bears flowers for up to six weeks, longer than most other cultivars. Shortly after its introduction, honors flowed in, including a PHS Gold Medal Award in 1998 and a Cary Award, sponsored by New England horticultural associations, in 2000.

William Flemer, III, of Princeton Nurseries in Allentown, New Jersey, also tried to find a better pink. He didn't, but when he viewed the rows of his seed-grown plants in the early 1990s, he did discover one plant blooming later than all the rest. Where most summersweets start to flower in late July in central New Jersey where I live, this one started in late August and continued to emit a heady fragrance well into September. He named the plant 'September Beauty'. Tim Wood, product development manager at the wholesale Spring Meadow Nursery in Grand Haven, Michigan, feels it is among the best of the white-flowered clethras.

Vincent Simeone, executive director of the Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, New York, casts his vote for best clethra cultivar in favor of 'Compacta'. Its discovery was even more serendipitous than that of 'September Beauty'. Retired New Jersey nurseryman Tom Dilatush spied it growing out of a compost heap in the mid 1970s. Simeone says that 'Compacta' has been a consistently outstanding, low-maintenance performer for over 25 years. About a foot taller than 'Hummingbird', this shrub is denser and does not sprawl as older 'Hummingbird' plants often do. "It has really dark green foliage," Simeone said, "and the up-to-five-inch-long white flowers



Top: *C. alnifolia* 'Hummingbird'

Bottom: *C. alnifolia* 'Pink Spires'



Left:
C. alnifolia
'Creel's
Calico'

Frederick H. Ray

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glow against the leaves."

Down at the University of Georgia, professor Michael Dirr collected 'Hummingbird' seeds and trialed the resulting 260 plants in an effort to find a small summersweet that did not sprawl with age. 'Sixteen Candles' resulted from this work and has just recently become available. At 30 inches tall, it is slightly smaller than 'Hummingbird'; it also bears white flowers that are upright rather than arched.

Professor Dirr eventually gave some of the seedlings to Plant Development Services in Loxley, Alabama. One of these plants produced 'White Dove', which is smaller (only 2 feet tall) and more compact than 'Sixteen Candles' and covered in fragrant white flowers at the height of its bloom period. This cultivar became commercially available within the past year.

Up north, in Massachusetts, Anne Bidwell collected clethra seeds from wild plants growing on Cape Cod. The flowers on one of the resulting plants resemble white lilacs rather than the slim spires found on all other sweet pepperbushes. When Bidwell brought cuttings from her plant to a propagation class at the Arnold Arboretum, the staff originally thought it might be another species, but tests proved otherwise. Named in her honor, 'Anne Bidwell' is a compact summersweet, growing 4 to 6 feet tall and blooming a week or two later than most other cultivars.

Elsewhere, botanists have yet to decide if another clethra is a variety of *C. alnifolia* or a separate species. This as-yet-unclassified shrub—which has a downy white under-coating on its leaves and is referred to by some horticulturists as **woolly summersweet**—grows throughout the lower southeast. It variously goes by the botanical names of *C. alnifolia* var. *tomentosa* or simply *C. tomentosa*. According to Ron Rabideau, manager of Rare Find Nursery in Jackson, New Jersey, the plants are hardy to Zone 5.

Woodlanders, a nursery in Aiken, South Carolina, has introduced two cultivars of this plant. Robert B. McCartney, manager and vice president of the nursery, explained that they never bothered to name their first introduction. It appears in the trade as

Above: *C. barbinervis*Left: *C. barbinervis* in fall.

SOURCES

Perhaps the only difficulty one will encounter in growing clethras is finding many of the new cultivars. The retail and mail-order firm **Rare Find Nursery** of Jackson, NJ (732-833-0613, www.rarefindnursery.com) has one of the widest selections, including 'White Dove' and 'Cottondale'. These last two are not listed in the catalog, which appears on their website, but tell them you know they have them because you read about it in *Green Scene*.

The mail-order firm **Woodlanders** of Aiken, SC (803-648-7522, www.woodlanders.net) offers a wonderful selection of clethras, but the only way you will learn which ones they sell is to buy the \$4 catalog, since their offerings are not listed on their website.

Waterloo Gardens, which has retail garden centers in Exton and Devon, PA, also does not list its offerings on its website at www.waterloogardens.com. They have a good selection of clethras, however. Call 610-363-0800 or visit them to learn about which ones are available.



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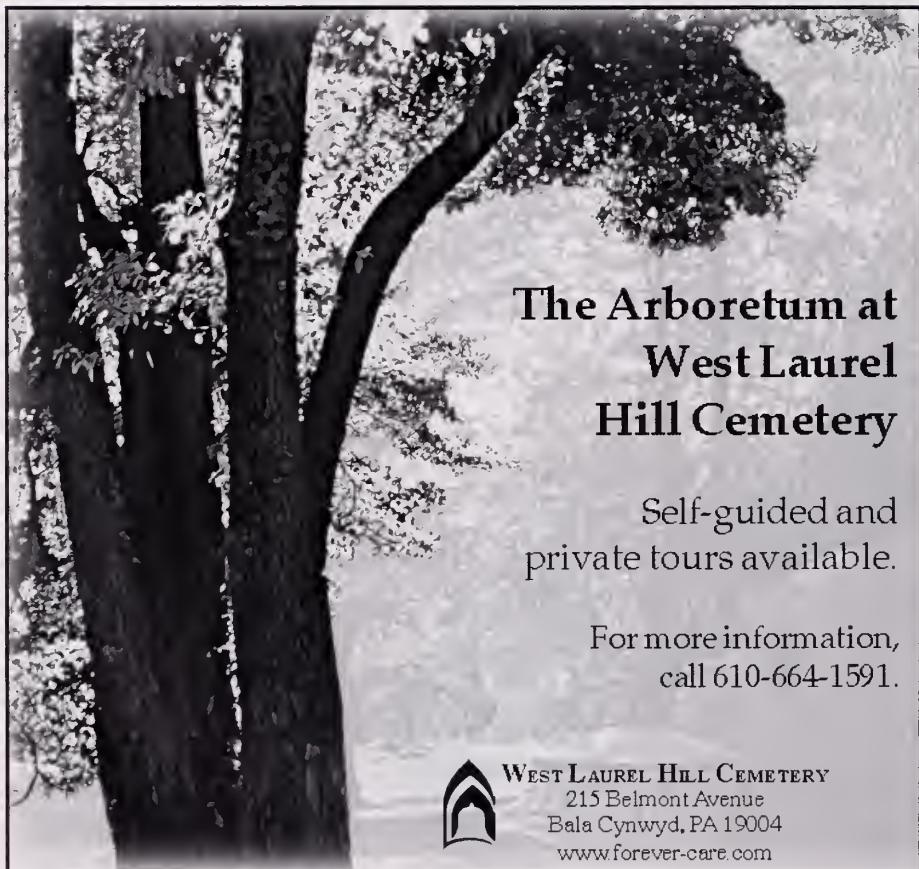
C. alnifolia 'Rosea'

Woodlanders form and has larger leaves than most—leaves with such a heavy white undercoating that they shimmer in summer breezes. Growing to 5 feet, this shrub can be pruned to a smaller stature. "All clethras take well to pruning," McCartney said.

About 10 years ago, McCartney went back to the Alabama and Florida areas where he had first come across the Woodlanders form of clethra and drove along dirt back roads looking for even more glamorous specimens. In a wild area on the Florida panhandle, he came across a truly exceptional plant bearing 16-inch-long, fragrant white flowers. He stopped the car, took cuttings, and named the plant 'Cottondale', after the location of the nearest town. It just entered the trade this year.

'Creel's Calico', prized for its variegated foliage, is another serendipitous discovery. Amateur botanist Mike Creel spotted a colony of this 4-foot-tall cultivar 15 years ago when he was leading a nature walk near Lexington, South Carolina. At first he thought the shrubs—"as bright as could be"—had been sprayed with weed killer. A closer look revealed leaves naturally splotched with glowing white markings. Creel collected seed and found the plant easy to propagate. He notes, however, that its leaves will lose their distinctive markings if the plant is fertilized.

So cheer up, fellow gardeners! The month of August is here and with it a wealth of fragrance and easy-care beauty from clethras large and small. All you have to do is plant them and sit back and enjoy their intoxicating aroma. 



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Breaking **THE RULES**

Lessons Learned from 20 Years in the Garden

Story by Fran Sorin



Taller plants can fit in the front or middle of borders, too. Note the billowing *Crambe cordifolia* on the distant right.



Above: A study in texture with perennials, shrubs and an ornamental grass in the rear.

Above right: The brilliant bronze of the *Cotinus* begins the parade down the *allée*.

Right: The sloping front lawn (shown in its original form in inset) has been converted into a welcoming garden room.



I have worked on the same piece of land, a steeply sloped and oddly shaped half-acre lot, for more than 20 years. I have made a multitude of mistakes and experienced enough *ah-ha* moments to make the joy of digging, observing and “connecting” to nature still amaze me. Here are some of the lessons I’ve learned in transforming my landscape over this extended period of time—some easy, some hard, but all inspiring and enlightening.

VIEW THE FRONT OF YOUR PROPERTY AS A GARDEN ROOM

The American public has been brainwashed into thinking that our front yards must look a certain way: a large swath of grass bordered by a regiment of evergreens along with some deciduous shrubs and trees. Pretty boring, right? I will never forget the first time that I went to Stratford-Upon-Avon in England and visited Anne Hathaway’s home, a lovely Tudor house. What grabbed me most intensely was the front cottage garden. The time I spent in this garden left me with the firm conviction that a front yard can be transformed into a garden room of its own.

Over several years and many re-incarnations, I finally was able to create the front-yard garden of my dreams—a meandering, English rose/perennial garden. It has a winding pathway (part grass and part stepping stones) that leads to other gardens on either side of the house. It is dotted with native junipers, boxwoods and rows of yews, plus rose arches to offer structure, and the remainder of the garden is a mix of perennials, tubers and bulbs.

EXPERIMENT WITH SCALE

The rule of thumb that tall plants go in the back of the perennial border and the shorter ones in the front, with the mid-sized ones sandwiched in between may make sense most of the time, but rules are made to be broken. Some of my favorite





plant placements are the result of letting inspiration take precedent over "the rules."

If a tall plant is very light and airy, it can make a great exclamation point towards the front or middle of the garden. I often place a large plant such as colewort (*Crambe cordifolia*) near the front of the border so that the aroma of its delicate white flowers literally touches a visitor passing by. The same can be done with certain types of roses.

Other plants I intermittently plop down in the front of the border are agaves, yuccas, euphorbias, phormiums, cannas and dahlias. Their exotic leaves and/or flowers demand attention. I do the same with grasses such as *Molinia 'Windspiel'* or *Panicum virgatum*. By mixing up their positioning and placing them in the front or middle of the border, the rhythm of the garden design is broken up. It jolts the eye and keeps things fresh and a bit whimsical. A little repositioning goes a long way.

HOW MUCH COLOR CAN YOU HANDLE?

The subject of color, like all of gardening, is an extremely personal one. I have seen gardeners who stick to a minimal palette of three to four colors because they feel that the repetition of color adds to the form of the garden.

A simple example of this is when you arrange flowers in a vase. I have always taught my students that it's much easier to make a strong statement with two to three colors rather than using every color in the rainbow. On the other hand, once you become more confident, you can feel a bit more free to experiment with accent colors, either in plants or painted furniture and pots. Sometimes a happy accident can have a won-

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derful effect: you may purchase a plant that you thought was a specific color, but when it bloomed—surprise!—it turns out to be a different shade altogether, yet it still works.

Ultimately, color is all in the eye of the beholder—in this case, the gardener. If anyone had told me 10 years ago that the base colors of my garden would be burgundy and chartreuse, I would have cringed. I started off by painting an old fence at the back of my property a chartreuse color, and it blended in beautifully with all of the other green hues. That led to my purchase of nine *Robinia pseudoacacia 'Frisia'* trees, which produce delicate yellow-green leaves in the spring, and nine smoke bushes (*Cotinus coggygria*) that are a deep burgundy in spring and summer.

Feel free to experiment with color to your heart's content. Who knows, maybe that periwinkle-blue front door that caught your eye in a magazine would be the perfect color to paint some old Adirondack chairs. It might add some much-needed zest to your garden. Play, experiment and have fun. You have nothing to lose but a bit of time.

LIMITATIONS CAN BE AN ASSET

This is a tough lesson to learn, but one that is critical for gardening, as well as living a creative and fulfilling life. So many of us have been raised with a passive attitude of wishful thinking: "If only I had done this..." or "When I become...."

So don't wait until you purchase the *perfect* house with a *perfect* piece of land before you get your hands into the dirt and begin to explore. It doesn't matter where you live; if you have the desire, you will find a way to bring a garden into your life. I am convinced that it is in part because I have gardened on what many consider a difficult piece of land in a suburban development that my garden has turned out so well. I was forced to face up to the limitations of my surroundings and then work with and through them.

Our gardens mirror our souls and the way we live. So embrace the place that you live in now and let the creative process begin. If you persist at trying to find different solutions on how to design it, remain flexible and avoid a rush to judgment in your decision-making process, you will have a great opportunity to turn your patch of earth into a little jewel. Often in life what we consider to be our greatest liabilities end up being our greatest strengths. So let the wild rumpus begin! 

Fran Sorin is the author of *Digging Deep: Unearthing Your Creative Roots Through Gardening*, published by Warner Books. She is a contributor for CBS Radio News and hosts a weekly gardening radio show for Infinity's Big Talker 1210AM. She also writes articles for *USA Weekend*. Sorin has been a regular contributor on NBC's *Weekend Today Show* and has made appearances on numerous television shows. For more information on Fran Sorin, click onto: www.fransorin.com.



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And Now For Something Completely Different...

For many gardeners, experimenting with colorful foliage takes a bit of nerve. They start with a few safe selections—perhaps a little silvery-leaved lavender here, or a blue-leaved hosta over there—then gradually branch out to something more daring. Others jump right in and fill their gardens with a veritable rainbow of foliage colors, including purple, chartreuse, red, and even multicolored variegates. But it takes a *real* foliage fanatic to try out some of the most unusual leaf colors: black, pink, and yes, even brown!

FADE TO BLACK

If you've already dabbled in purple foliage, then you know how useful it is for creating great-looking combinations with other leaf colors, as well as with a wide range of flowers. When you're ready to take that intensity to an extreme, look to plants with foliage so dark that it practically appears black. Black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens'), for example, is perfect when you need something short with narrow foliage. *Colocasia antiquorum* 'Illustris' and *C. esculenta* 'Black Magic' definitely fit the bill where big and bold is in order, while 'Ace of Spades' and 'Blackie' sweet potato vines (*Ipomoea batatas*) are ideal for creating carpets of darkness.

All of these moody beauties are spectacular when paired with silver or chartreuse-leaved partners, and they look equally fantastic with both bright and pastel blooms. In a small garden, a single dark-leaved plant may be enough to provide impact without making the whole area look too dark. In a large garden,

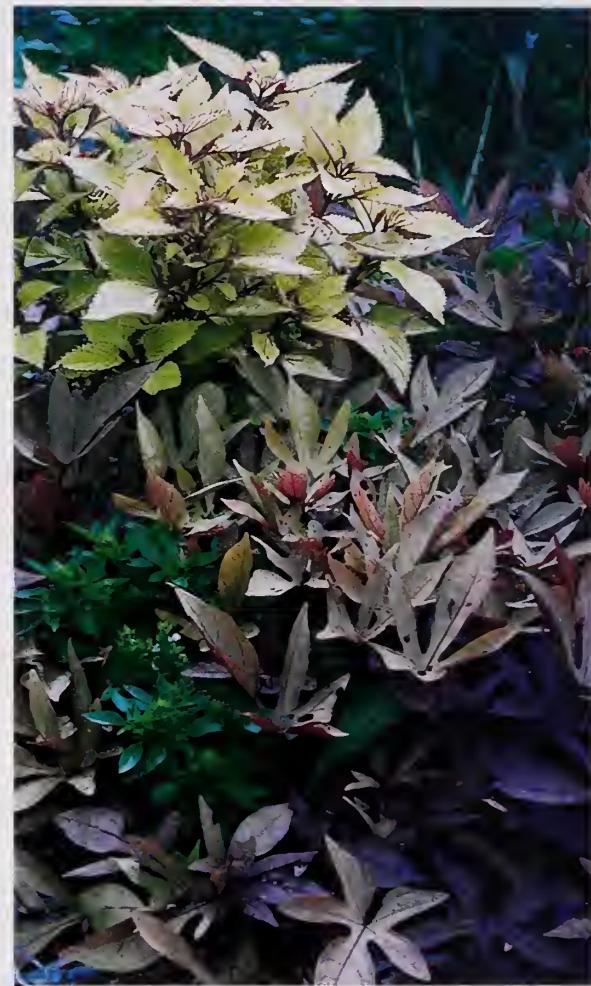
allowing a drift of dark foliage to weave among more cheerful companions can create a memorable contrast.

THINK PINK

If black foliage is a little too gloomy for your taste, how about something a little lighter—like pink? Not too many plants have distinctly pink foliage, but there are a few that come close, including some New Zealand flax (*Phormium*), rex begonia, and coleus cultivars. There are, however, a fair number of green-and-white-variegated plants that include some pink in their leaves, including 'Burgundy Glow' ajuga, 'First Blush' euphorbia, 'Pink Frost' sweet potato vine, and *Sedum spurium* 'Tricolor'. The pink is typically most prominent in cool weather, all but disappearing during the summer. Pink polka dot plant (*Hypoestes phyllostachya* 'Pink Splash'), though, keeps its colorful spots all through the growing season, making it a great container companion for pink-flowered summer-bloomers.

A STUDY OF BROWN

Of all the foliage colors to choose from, selecting plants with brown foliage takes the most horticultural chutzpah. Planning combinations around a plant that already looks dead definitely requires an adventurous design sense (or at least a good sense of humor). Perhaps the best known of the brown-leaved



Nancy Ondra

plants are the New Zealand sedges, including the upright, tufted *Carex buchananii* and the more mounded *C. comans*. 'Sweet Caroline Bronze' sweet potato vine, pictured above, is another plant that falls into this color category.

These oddities are tailor-made accents, because, for better or worse, they never fail to attract attention. Brown leaves often have pink or orange tones in them, so flowers in those colors make harmonious companions; yellow flowers and foliage are often pleasing partners as well. Browns paired with silvers and blues are kind of dicey, but hey, if you're going to give brown foliage a try, why not go all the way and do something really wild? You can always change it next year! 

Nancy J. Ondra is a freelance garden writer who lives in Bucks County, PA. She has written several books including *Grasses: Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design* (Storey Books).



Make it Fancy in Fall

What flowering annuals do most gardeners think of planting in the fall? You guessed it, mums, ornamental kale or cabbage, pansies and maybe, violas. Not much to choose from? Have you considered alyssum, bachelor's button, calendula, dianthus, Drummond phlox, dusty miller, million bells, snapdragon, osteospermum and twinspur? These cool-weather tolerant flowering annuals look great and even survive light frosts.

African daisy (*Osteospermum ecklonis*) and *Diascia* are two of the under-utilized annuals from this group. The tallest of these is the African daisy, which grows 12 to 18 inches in height and width. An incredibly beautiful cool-season annual, it comes in white, pink, rose, purple, and yellow. Many cultivars have amazing azure blue "eyes," which, to me, are their primary asset.

Osteospermum 'Passion Mix', according to Ohio State University's extension service, "flowers all season but superior flower show occurs in spring and fall." This series has the blue-eyed flowers and is available in white, rose, pink, reddish purple, and white on bicolor flowers.

Most African daisies bloom best in spring and fall, while some newer varieties, like those in the Symphony Series from Proven Winners, tolerate summer heat. They are part of Proven Winners' marketing program called Fall Magic in which "all of the varieties in the collection will take light frost, with many plants capable of withstanding short periods of temperatures down into the teens." 'Lemon Symphony', 'Orange Symphony', and 'Peach Symphony' fit into the Fall Magic group. African Daisies can tolerate temperatures as low as 25°F.

The African daisy does not like poorly drained soils, but does well in free draining beds or containers if kept from wilting. Few pests or diseases affect this plant, which prefers sun to part-shade for best growth and flowering. Use a well-balanced fertilizer that is high in nitrogen every two weeks for container-grown

Photos by Pete Brown



Left: *Osteospermum* in a hanging display at Chanticleer in Wayne, PA.



Above: A basket of *Diascia* at Meadowbrook Farm near Abington, PA.

plants and once a month for landscape plants.

Another cool-season annual, *Diascia* (commonly known as twinspur), is free flowering but lower growing (6 to 10 inches in height) and it grows in mounded or trailing forms. It blooms continuously and heavily from late spring through fall. Like the African daisy, this plant prefers full sun to part-shade, evenly moist soil and fertilization as described for African daisy.

Diascia is available in Ball Horticultural Company's Simply Beautiful program. Simply Beautiful varieties "have been tested and proven in gardens around the country...only the best varieties known for their superb garden performance and easy care" are chosen according to the website, www.simplybeautifulgardens.com/about.

The Simply Beautiful group includes the Whisper Series and the Wink series of *Diascia*. 'Whisper Apricot', 'Whisper Salmon', 'Whisper Cranberry Red' and 'Whisper Lavender Pink' grow 12 to 15 inches in height and have an attractive,

mounded, semi-trailing habit. The Wink series includes diascias that grow 8 to 10 inches high with a more upright habit. They are available in 'Wink Lavender Pink', 'Wink Light Apricot', and 'Wink Pink'.

Whether you use these plants in containers to replace spent summer annuals or in beds, you can surely add some extra life to your plantings and extend the gardening season—even beyond frost. Go ahead; pick up these plants at your garden center and make your garden just as interesting and colorful in autumn as in the spring and summer. 

A project manager for PHS's Philadelphia Green program, Marilyn Romenesko is a trained horticulturist and ISA-certified arborist. She gardens avidly in Wilmington, Delaware.





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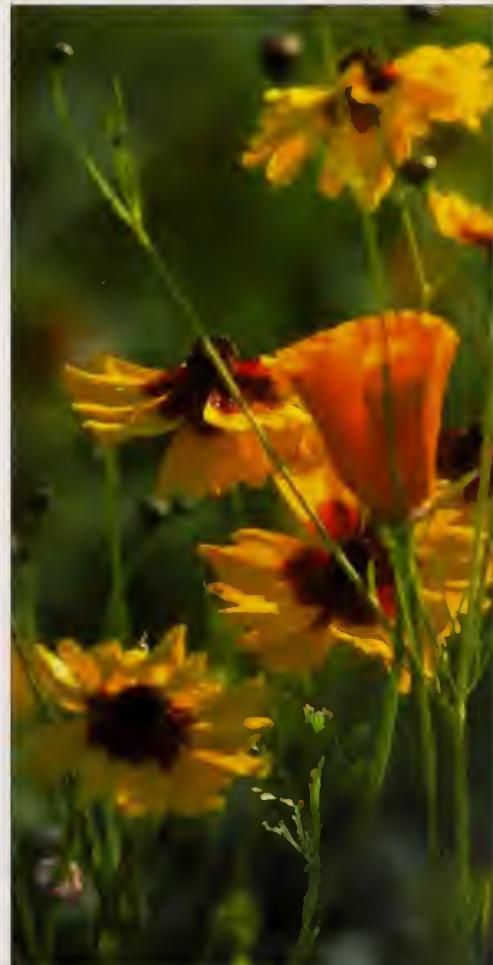
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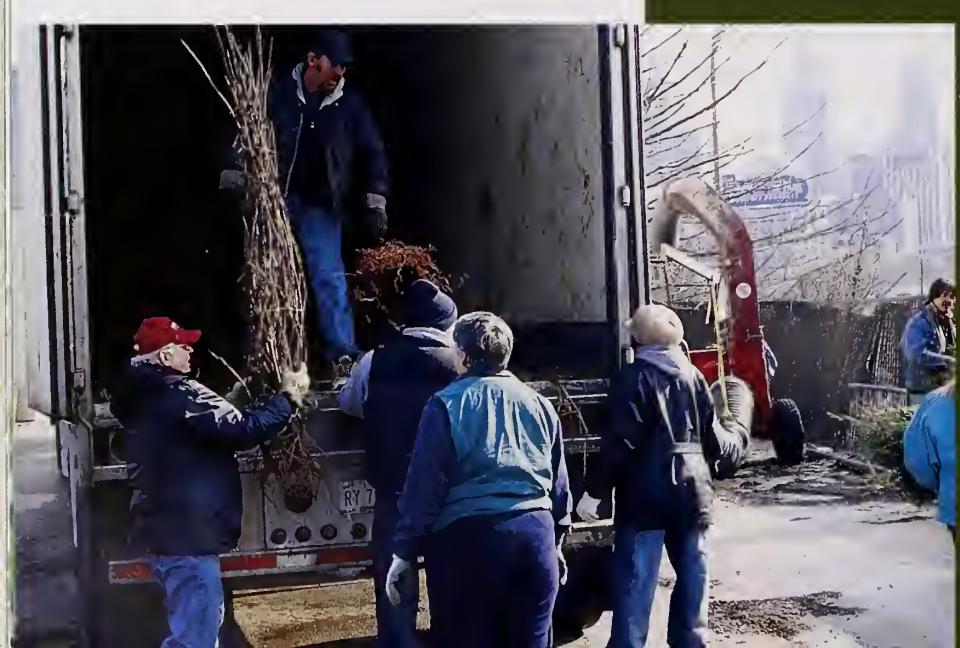
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Classifieds

Operation Tree Drop



On a spring morning in late March, travelers zipping down the Schuylkill Expressway probably thought they were seeing things, like a huge tractor trailer in a parking lot just a stone's throw from the highway, surrounded by folks unloading heaps of bare-root trees. For the past five years, this...err...rather unusual annual tree delivery has been organized by PHS and its Tree Tenders project, which teaches community groups tree care and planting skills. This year, these groups purchased more than 250 trees.

Pinning down an exact delivery date and time is a bit of a challenge. "The trees travel from Iowa," says PHS's Mindy Maslin, adding that the delivery route involves an additional 15 or so destinations along the way. Usually, she'll get a call from the nursery with a drop-off "window" within a week's time, and, as the truck gets closer to Philadelphia, the specifics are determined. Even still, it took a flurry of last-minute phone calls and emails by Mindy and her tireless organizers to get everyone to the delivery site earlier than anyone had anticipated.

"It was amazing how everybody was able to change their plans at the last minute and make it out here at the start of a work day," marvels Ernie Suskin, one of Mindy's key volunteers in organizing the delivery. In just a few hours, all of the trees were divided up and lashed to cars, pick-ups, and any other vehicle (did anyone else see that rickshaw?) that would take them to their new city neighborhoods.

Ah, but let's get to the root of the matter—why *bare-root* trees? Mindy runs through some reasons. "Bare-root trees have a greater root mass, so they can establish faster, and since they're much lighter than balled-and-burlapped trees, they're easier for volunteers to plant." She adds that these trees are much less expensive, costing on average \$20 to \$40 as opposed to \$100 to \$125 for a "B&B" of similar size.

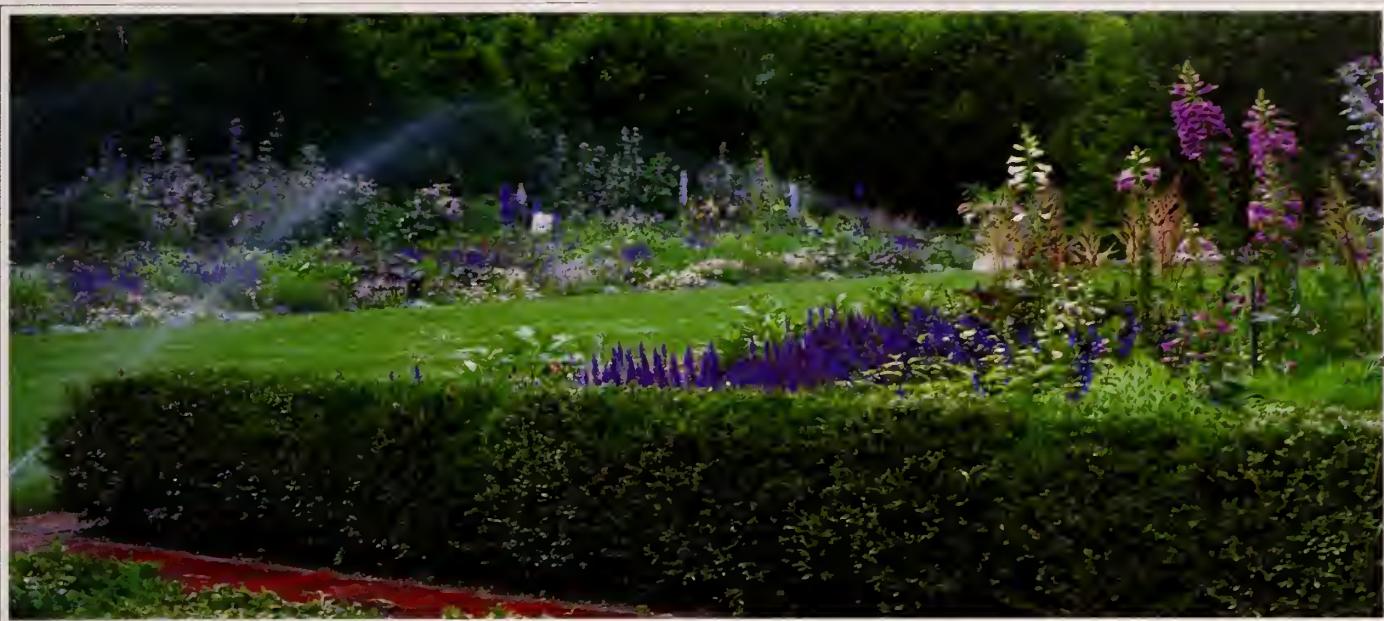
Although there are a number of advantages, bare-root trees do have specific requirements. They are not large in caliper—1.5 inches at most—which makes them easy to handle but more vulnerable on busy urban streets. Also, the exposed roots require extra tender loving care. After delivery, the trees

must be soaked in a special hydrogel solution, to protect the roots, and placed in plastic bags; then they need to be planted within a few days to ensure a successful planting. (To prepare, the participating Tree Tender groups attend a special training on bare-root planting.)

Under the right conditions, bare-root trees can thrive. Mindy says that a Penn State workshop on bare-root trees convinced her of their merits. "I became a believer," she recalls. And, apparently, so have her Tree Tenders.

—John Gannon

Tree Tenders is a program for residents of Philadelphia. For more information, call 215-988-8844 or email mmaslin@pennhort.org.



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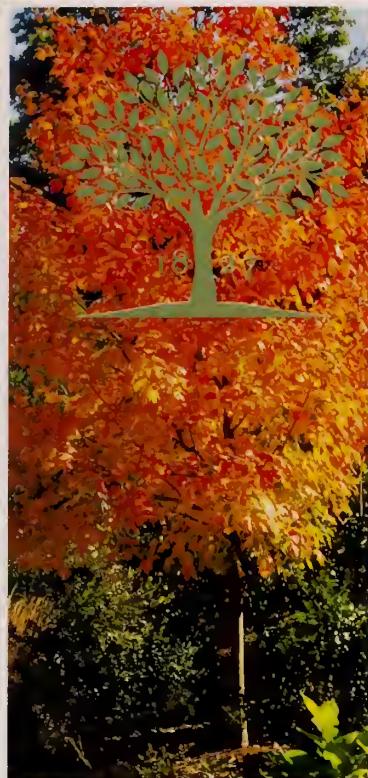


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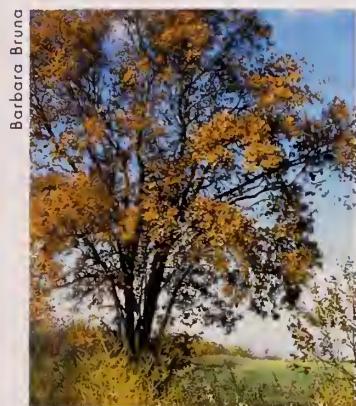
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Sure, we all learned in history class about Lewis and Clark's famous expedition, but did you know that they collected close to 200 plant specimens along the way? Right here in Philadelphia, the Academy of Natural Sciences is home to the Lewis and Clark Herbarium, which includes hundreds of pressed plants collected by the dynamic duo. Join our guides from the Academy for a botanical take on this adventure.

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover photos by Bob Sorrasin, Rob Cardillo and Frederick H. Ray

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That Vacuum Thing

Photos by Pete Brown



I don't tend to be an overly philosophical individual, but if there's any garden mantra I live by, it is Thoreau's chestnut, "Nature abhors a vacuum." As the seasons roll by, I find myself marveling less about how pretty my flowers are and more about how tenaciously Mother Nature fights me every step of the way. I admire the way bindweed sneaks up the stem of a rose, trying to strangle the life out of my dainty 'Carefree Wonder', or the way the thistle seeds blow into my property by the thousands, delivering springtime chores by the hour. Even that mile-a-minute vine (with its tell-tale triangular leaf) has to be admired for its insidious invasiveness, if only with a bottle of Round-Up in one hand.

Ultimately, these observations inform my gardening and, now that I'm not a young gardener anymore, I find myself battling Mother Nature less than in the past. These days, I'm looking for peaceful co-existence and, when I go to the nursery in spring and fall, I'm frequently looking for perennials, shrubs and trees that will survive no matter what, even if I let them down by not watering or weeding enough. Simply put, I want a Special Ops-grade plant that can take a pummeling from my Zone 6 environment.

All this is a wordy, circuitous prologue to why I love Gold Medal Plants. I have been planting them around my place for a few years now, and all are fine, attractive plants. And, so far, all work happily alongside Mother Nature, creating a natural and *manageable* landscape. (And in this never-enough-time world of ours, *manageable* is the key word.)

I have placed my Gold Medal Plants strategically. Along

the street in front of my house, I'm creating a natural barrier of shrubs, including ninebark 'Diablo' (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)—Pictured left and below), viburnum 'Shasta' (*V. plicatum f. tomentosum*), and Wine & Roses weigela (*W. florida 'Alexandra'*). Along the side of the property, I plopped in 20 small 'Green Giant' arborvitae trees last fall, wistfully envisioning a solid green wall in a few years. And in a recent eBay coup, I grabbed two *Clethra alnifolia 'Ruby Spice'* for \$10 each, which I tucked into shady areas.

Over the years, these Gold Medal shrubs, trees and vines will begin to gradually fill the vacuum around my abode, with

no harsh weeding, pruning or spraying on my part, but by simply being good plants that grow well in this region. Once established, they won't need much in the way of coddling. I just admire their foliage or ornamental blossoms and my job is done. If only all gardening could be this easy. 

For more on the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Gold Medal Plant program, go to www.goldmedalplants.com or call 215-988-8824.





Put Your *Phalaenopsis* to Bed this Fall

By Pete Prown

It's October and time for that *Phalaenopsis* orchid you bought at the Philadelphia Flower Show to take its autumnal nap. If you, like me, read Ellen Zachos' excellent primer last year on inspiring Phals to re-bloom (April 2003 issue), then you've learned a few tricks to encourage the annual show. I followed her steps last fall and was rewarded with another bounty of blooms this past winter. (Ellen, by the way, is the author of *Orchid Growing for Wimps*.)

As a refresher, let's go over a few of the tips:

- ❖ After your Phal stopped blooming this spring or summer, you hopefully began lightly fertilizing it with a water-soluble orchid food.
- ❖ In fall, stop fertilizing and give your plant a rest: cut back on watering—only doing so when you feel the potting medium is dry about an inch below the surface—and keep them in a warm, humid environment. Bathrooms with showers are good locations, as are busy kitchens near the sink or a fish-tank with gravel on the bottom.
- ❖ Phals don't like hot, direct sunlight—medium, indirect light from an east or west-facing window is preferred.



Photos by Pete Prown

❖ After Christmas, resume normal watering to awaken the plant from its nap. Once wakened, your orchid will begin producing purplish spikes from the stem in a few weeks—these will be your new flower stems.

❖ When blooming starts, you can resume light fertilizing, according to the instructions on the orchid-food container.

One final thought: I keep my Phals in a bathroom with an overhead skylight and, while they produced spikes during the early winter of '04, it was at a very slow rate. So around February, I brought in a supplemental floodlight to speed things along and that did the trick; it was in bloom within a few weeks. Lesson learned: keep an eye on the light needs of the flower spikes.

In general, it's a good idea to check on your orchids a few times a week, for several reasons. Not only do these check-ups help create successfully blooming plants, but I found that tending my orchids regularly was a great way to beat the winter *blahs*. Corny or not, there's a certain thrill one experiences when discovering a brand-new flower spike in the dead of winter. 

We have a limited number of copies of the April 2003 *Green Scene*, containing Ellen Zachos' article, still available.

Copies are \$7.50 apiece, shipping included. If interested, send a check and your address to:

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A Really Tough Test

It seems as if everyone has heard a story of someone's bad experience with a landscape firm. Maybe your friend's recently pruned shrubs now eerily resemble the lost souls of the lower circles of Hades. Perhaps a contractor mistook some of your mother-in-law's perennials for weeds and ripped them out, leaving the weeds to continue their march towards world domination. Grass mowed too low? Mulch piled too high? For every beautiful landscape, there's a nightmarish scenario lurking three doors down.

Well, besides word of mouth, how do you find a competent landscaper you can depend on? The Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association (PLNA) has the answer. Its Certified Landscape Technician program, now in its second year, raises the bar for the industry.

Licensed from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, the Certified Landscape Technician program (CLT) involves written and hands-on tests for three modules: installation; maintenance; and irrigation. It also includes a "Common Core" test, which includes subjects common to all of the modules, including first aid and safety, plan reading, plant identification, and grading and sodding, to name a few. In order to receive the CLT designation, individuals must pass the Common Core test plus one of the modules. Currently, 26 states and provinces (*oh, Canada!*) administer this testing process.

PLNA believes that the certified landscape technician program can make it easier for you to choose the right contractor for the job. "There are so many companies out there to choose from," explains Margaret O'Neal, PLNA's director of education and certification. "This certification is an indicator to the consumer that a landscape

company cares about professionalism." Moreover, it's good for a company's reputation, as it registers the firm as an employer of CLT professionals.

Joe Blandy of Stoney Bank Nurseries in Glen Mills, PA says that their company—which provides landscape design and installation services—plans to send their foremen to future CLT trainings. "It's good for the industry to have a standard set of practices," he notes.

Margaret says that becoming a certified landscape technician also aids in career development. "Some companies will provide incentives to their employees if they become certified," she says. "Plus, this is valuable hands-on knowledge that will help individuals advance their careers."

In its inaugural year, 28 people entered the CLT fray, and three of them passed all of the "elements" in a module. It seems like a low number, but Margaret explains that this is actually the national average, adding that folks only have to retake the failed portions of the module at the next test date. This year, 60 have signed up for the challenge.

Obviously, with the CLT program in Pennsylvania only in its infant stage, you aren't likely to find CLT folks growing on trees just yet. What this program *will do* is provide another tool to the consumer who's looking for the ultimate contractor—one who can install the most complex irrigation system in the known universe so that your garden becomes a healthy haven, not a watery grave. 

—John Gannon

For more information on the Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association and its Certified Landscape Technician Program, see www.plna.com.



From Alley to Garden Retreat

Although the small alley next to the Mount Carmel Methodist Church in North Philadelphia is all concrete, Reverend Cookie Bracey saw something more—a relaxing garden spot. With a few chairs, a pulpit and pots of impatiens, she transformed this uncompromising hardscape into a quiet area for church study groups and private reflection. The area was so pleasant that she entered the garden in PHS's City Gardens Contest this past summer.

"When it gets hot, we come out here and have our discussions," she says. "I put pots of flowers by each chair so each person has their own little 'garden.' And I always plant impatiens. I like to think of them as my signature flower."

And no question, Reverend Bracey and her impatiens have brightened up this urban alley beyond belief. 

Recycling Leaves for the Garden

by Janet Bly

Horticulturists and extension agents have long touted the benefits of leaves as a great soil conditioner. This advice is now bolstered by evidence from recent research, which not only confirmed the benefits of leaves, but also yielded some new information and dispelled some myths.

You can use leaves in their freshly fallen state—shredded to speed decomposition—or you can compost them first (composted leaves are also known as leaf mold). Either way, recycled leaves offer a number of benefits that every gardener should know about. They add organic content, improve the soil's moisture retention, and provide essential nutrients. Let's find out why leaves are a such good thing.

Organic Matters

Organic matter is the key to healthy soil. It is abundant in all composts—typically 50 to 60 percent on a dry-weight

basis—and leaf compost is no exception. Organic matter improves the soil's **tilth**, or structure, which allows water and nutrients to circulate freely. It helps regulate the temperature of the soil and provides a food source for desirable **micro-organisms**. Organic material also provides varying amounts of **macro-** and **micro-nutrients** that plants need for healthy growth.

Organic matter also helps the soil absorb and retain **moisture**. Every one percent rise in organic matter improves water-holding capacity by 100 percent—a great advantage during dry spells. In studies by Rutgers University researchers, corn showed less drought stress, and corn and soybean crops had higher yields when grown in leaf-amended soil.

Both raw and composted leaves provide organic content, but here's where the difference between raw and composted leaves becomes important. Raw leaves actually cause a temporary **nitrogen deficiency** in the soil, because they contain lots of carbon, which promotes fungi and bacteria in the soil that consume nitrogen, slowing plant development until the leaves have time to decompose. To compensate, add a high-nitrogen fertilizer during the growing season following leaf application. In contrast, leaf mold, which is already decomposed, does not inhibit plant growth.

Keep an Eye on the pH

Some gardeners may be surprised to learn that leaves can affect soil pH. While leaf compost generally has a pH level that is neutral to alkaline, with a typical range of 7.0 to 7.3, pH can be even higher, leading some experts to discourage its use with acid-loving plants. However, the sweetening effects of leaf compost can be easily countered with acidic fertilizers.

Put Leaves to Work in Your Garden

Leaves are a natural **mulch**. Apply three inches of leaf mold around shrubs, trees, and perennials. Leaf compost holds its dark color longer than shredded hardwood, but is less effective in weed control. Use it in densely planted areas where weeds are not a major problem. Or, apply a thin layer of shredded hardwood over the leaf mold to deter weeds. If using raw leaves, be sure to apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer in the spring and avoid using them on new plants.

As a **soil amendment**, spread an inch or two of leaf compost in established planting areas, tilled in to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. You can also use leaf compost or shredded raw leaves when preparing new planting beds in the **fall** for spring planting. Work in 4 to 6 inches of leaves to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. With raw leaves, add nitrogen fertilizer at the same time. You can also improve the soil in your **containers** by adding leaf mold (up to one-third of total volume). And when planting **trees and shrubs**, substitute leaf compost for peat moss as backfill for trees and shrubs that prefer neutral to alkaline conditions.

Free for the Asking

Leaf compost is easily made at home. The Internet is a wealth of information here, but if you lack the space or inclination to make your own, you've got some options. For frugal gardeners with strong backs, leaf mold is available from many municipalities for the price of taking it away. Make sure you get fully cured compost—"young" compost may contain weed seeds and may not be fully decomposed. Or, you can purchase leaf mold from a landscape supplier or nursery and have it delivered. If you work with a landscape contractor, ask them to use leaf mold as a soil conditioner or mulch.

So, before you bag up your leaves and put them at the curb, try composting them instead. Your garden will thank you for it. 

Karen Bussolini





Urban Birds Get New Homes

Over the summer, 150 artful, colorful birdhouses were installed in cleaned and greened vacant lots in parts of West Philadelphia, Feltonville, and Tioga. Philadelphia Green commissioned artist Tara Herberger to make them, and kids from the Heston and Cleveland



Citizens Bank helps Hansberry Garden

In an event coordinated by Philadelphia Green, employees of Citizens Bank came out on a humid August morning to mow, weed, and plant at the Hansberry Garden in the city's Germantown section. This is one of five greening projects that these volunteers are participating in, which augments Citizens Bank's generous \$50,000 grant towards Philadelphia Green projects.

Revived in 2002 after years of neglect, the Hansberry Garden has 20 raised beds for vegetables and several ornamental beds; and it serves as an outdoor classroom for two nearby public schools. The garden group is currently working with Philabundance and Philadelphia Green to grow produce to share with area shelters. In the summer months, a monthly flea market helps raise funds for the garden.

Elementary Schools painted them with images of hope, peace, and nature. Special thanks to the participants in two drug treatment facilities, New Desire Inc. and New Start Rehabilitation, who helped dig the holes and erect the birdhouse "condos" (four birdhouses to a single post).

"We wanted to put them up in lots that these kids pass by every day on their way to school," says PG project manager Debbie Hall. "It's a great reminder of the transformation that's taken place—how what were once trashed lots are now green spaces, filled with the kids' beautiful, creative birdhouses."

Flowers for City Blocks

Philadelphia Green worked with neighborhood leaders, community organizations and residents in five neighborhoods to create streets of lush container plantings, or "garden blocks." Staff led workshops, sharing planting and maintenance tips. All told, 43 blocks were transformed. (Pictured is Willard Street in Kensington.)

Philadelphia Green Happenings

Here's a look at just a few recent projects of PHS's urban-greening program, Philadelphia Green.

Photographs by John Gannon and Jackie Wright



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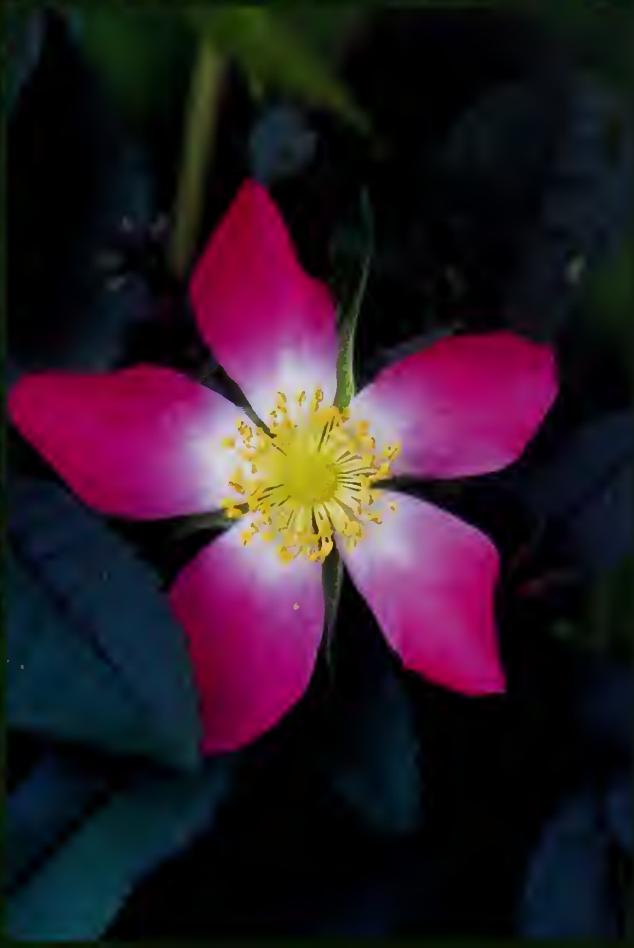
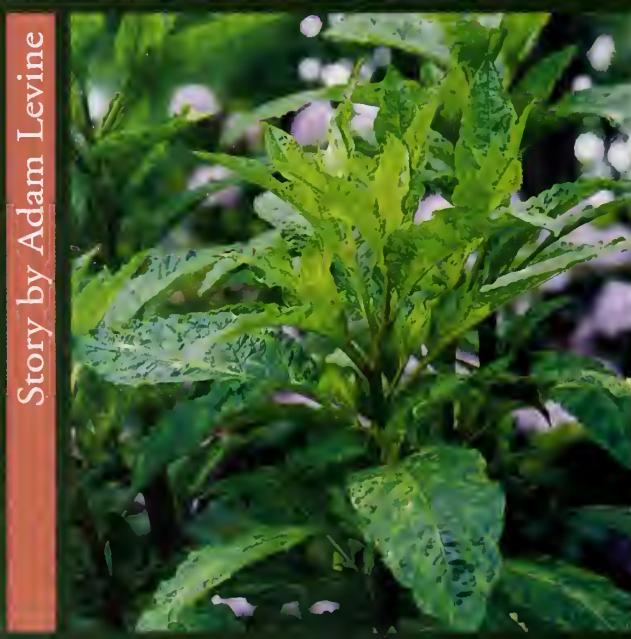
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THE PLANTSMEN



Story by Adam Levine

A Visit to the Garden of David Culp and Michael Alderfer

One way to get to the beautiful garden of David Culp and Michael Alderfer, about 30 miles outside Philadelphia, is to take a four-lane limited-access "bypass" designed to carry harried commuters past congested towns as they race to and from their jobs. Such roads often seem to me a modern perversion of evolution, a test of human stamina and nerves that could be considered "survival of the fastest." I am always relieved when I survive the drive to Culp and Alderfer's exit, decelerate down the ramp, and turn up into a little valley, dotted with old farmhouses and an old mill beside a tumbling creek that seems part of a bygone world.

On my first visit a few years ago I missed the garden and came immediately to a typical suburban development, planted on a former farm, that adjoins their property on the upper edge. While the modern houses with their over-groomed lawns snapped me out of my colonial reverie and back to the present, this juxtaposition with sterile suburbia only makes Culp's and Alderfer's garden seem more special, and important. Great gardens such as this one are the "ambassadors" of horticulture, announcing with their simple existence: This is what is possible. When such a garden also has an eloquent and impassioned spokesperson, this message of hope for the American landscape gets carried that much further.

"When it comes to gardening and plants, I've always been irrepressible," Culp says. "I lived in apartments where you couldn't walk out on the balconies because there were so many plants. I look into the future and I see us still here—we may be using walkers, but we'll be gardening all the same. I don't see that it will ever end."

An incorrigible optimist, Culp had big dreams in 1990 when he bought the

"When it comes to GARDENING and PLANTS, I've always been IRREPRESSIBLE."



Opposite page clockwise from top left: *Iris sibirica 'Caesar's Brother'*

Michael Alderfer and David Culp

Rosa glauca

Pokeweed (Phytolacca americana).



restored 1790 farmhouse and surrounding two acres, a relatively flat rectangle that sits below a steep hillside of roughly equal size. He began working close to the house, creating a raised bed outside the kitchen window that he calls the "Jewel Box," which showcases small plants that might otherwise get lost in the larger garden. He cleared debris from a roofless, stonewalled shell and turned it into a combination ruin/rock garden. Alderfer moved in with Culp in 1993, and in addition to working together to refine what had already been done, they began developing new garden areas. A fenced, four-square vegetable garden, surrounded by perennial borders, is the summertime feature at the center of the property. The gravel driveway is partially planted with bulbs and other plants, and even the once-barren roadside strip is now adorned with euphorbias, sedums, salvias, *Verbascum*, and other drought-tolerant plants which, by early summer, billow all the way to the edge of the pavement.

Their hillside garden, meanwhile, is an ongoing project begun in 1997. Alderfer recalls their initial battle on this steep slope, twice hacking back a 6-foot-high tangle of invasive vines and shrubs before any new

planting could begin. The lower limbs of existing trees were removed to brighten the understory and clear a view to the hilltop from the garden below. Several dead trees were left standing to provide habitat for wildlife, and even some of the poison ivy was spared, since its berries are a rich source of food for birds, which both men love. A network of paths has expanded along with the hillside plantings, both to permit the gardeners access for maintenance and allow them to visit favorite plants and enjoy the elevated view of the house and garden below. As long as a football field, the hillside is now a tapestry of color and texture in every season. Two highlights are the bright sweeps of daffodils in early spring, and later in the season, the more subtle

sweeps of blue-green hosta and hellebore foliage, punctuated by the flowers of scores of hydrangeas.

Alderfer works for a company that installs and maintains indoor plantscapes, while Culp works in sales and research for Sunny Border Nurseries, a Connecticut wholesale grower. As part of this job, he spends from four to six weeks a year traveling around the world, looking for new plants that the nursery might acquire and bring to market. These trips also give him the opportunity to feed his and Alderfer's personal horticultural passions. In Italy a number of years ago, Culp saw how *Arum italicum* grew wild in the dry hillsides around Rome and has since been buying unusual specimens for his own dry hillside.

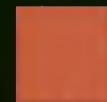
**"If I like a GENUS,
I INDULGE myself in it
COMPLETELY."**

He fell in love with the multitude of Hepatica hybrids at a nursery in England and, at a Buddhist monastery in Japan, he was so amazed by the centuries-old varieties of *Iris ensata* that he forgot to take any pictures.

The creation of consummate plantsmen, this garden depends as much on the art and the craft of horticulture as it does on the science. Both men are collectors, with unusual species and varieties of many genera among their prized possessions, but they also share a passion for design and color. "If I like a genus I indulge myself in it completely," Culp says, but he encourages visitors to see beyond the botany. "I also want people who come here to react to the garden emotionally. It's not just a little cerebral game. I want them to feel it, touch it, smell it, like we do."

Unlike many collectors' gardens, in which the prizes are displayed in ranks as subtle as a big game hunter's trophy room, here the gems are grown alongside commoner plants, carefully blended into the design of the whole, and can be easy to miss without the gardeners as guides. One of my recent visits was in November, after a hard frost had blackened most of the perennials and annuals and most of the area's gardeners had already put their beds to bed. As we walked around this seemingly barren landscape, Culp suddenly dropped to his knees on a gravel path near the house. Looking down, I saw the diminutive object of his adoration: a clump of blooming snowdrops, one of about 50 different species and forms that find a home here. Culp's enthusiasms are infectious, and I soon found myself kneeling beside him, peering into one of the flowers, trying to discern what made this specimen unique besides a name—*Galanthus reginae olgae* ssp. *reginae olgae*—that seemed far too long for a plant so small.

Other collections integrated into the garden include roses, hardy geraniums, kniphofias, cyclamen, euphorbias, lilies, and peonies. The garden's "signature" genus is *Helleborus*, which Culp has been growing for more than 20 years and breeding for more than a dozen. The collection now numbers in the hundreds, with 50 double-flowered forms alone, and he is constantly



Top: A lily hybrid.



Left: *Euphorbia myrsinifolia*



Bottom left: *Astrantia* sp.



Bottom right: Hay-mulched path in vegetable garden.

"I can't LIVE without FLOWERS."



adding to it with his own new hybrids and those of other breeders in the United States and abroad. One result of this obsession has just been unveiled, with plants from his "Brandywine" seed strain of hellebores now being sold to the wholesale trade by North Creek Nurseries, in Landenberg, Pa. They should start appearing in retail nurseries over the next few years.

Culp admires hellebores for their wide range of flower colors—from near-black to white and with many shades between (except for the blues and reds that have so far eluded breeders), their evergreen foliage, and for their ability to grow almost anywhere except in standing water and full, baking sun. "But what first captured me was their spirit, their gumption for blooming in February, or even January some years," he says. Culp and Alderfer have succeeded in creating a four-season garden, a rarity in this temperate climate. Large sweeps of hellebores—in the beds around the house, on the hillside, and elsewhere in the garden—form the core of the garden's winter show. Strong supporting roles are played by *Galanthus*, *Adonis*, winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*), and the tiny but graceful *Narcissus* 'Cedric Morris', which blooms on and off from September to March. Providing the backdrop for these flowers are the golden russet foliage of several forms of *Carex*, the black strappy leaves of *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens' (Black mondo grass), the shiny dark green *Arum* foliage and various evergreen ferns such as *Dryopteris* × *australis* (Dixie wood fern), one of Culp's favorites.

These flowers and greenery work to eliminate any sense of a "dormant" season in this garden, thereby minimizing the feelings of loss that are an inherent part of horticulture, where beauty is always fleeting and death always right around the corner. In this exuberant four-season garden, little time or energy is expended on looking back at what was, or what could have been.

"I can't live without flowers," says Culp, as Alderfer smiles and nods in agreement. "In this garden, there's never any downtime. We do away with the sadness, because there's always something on the way to look forward to."



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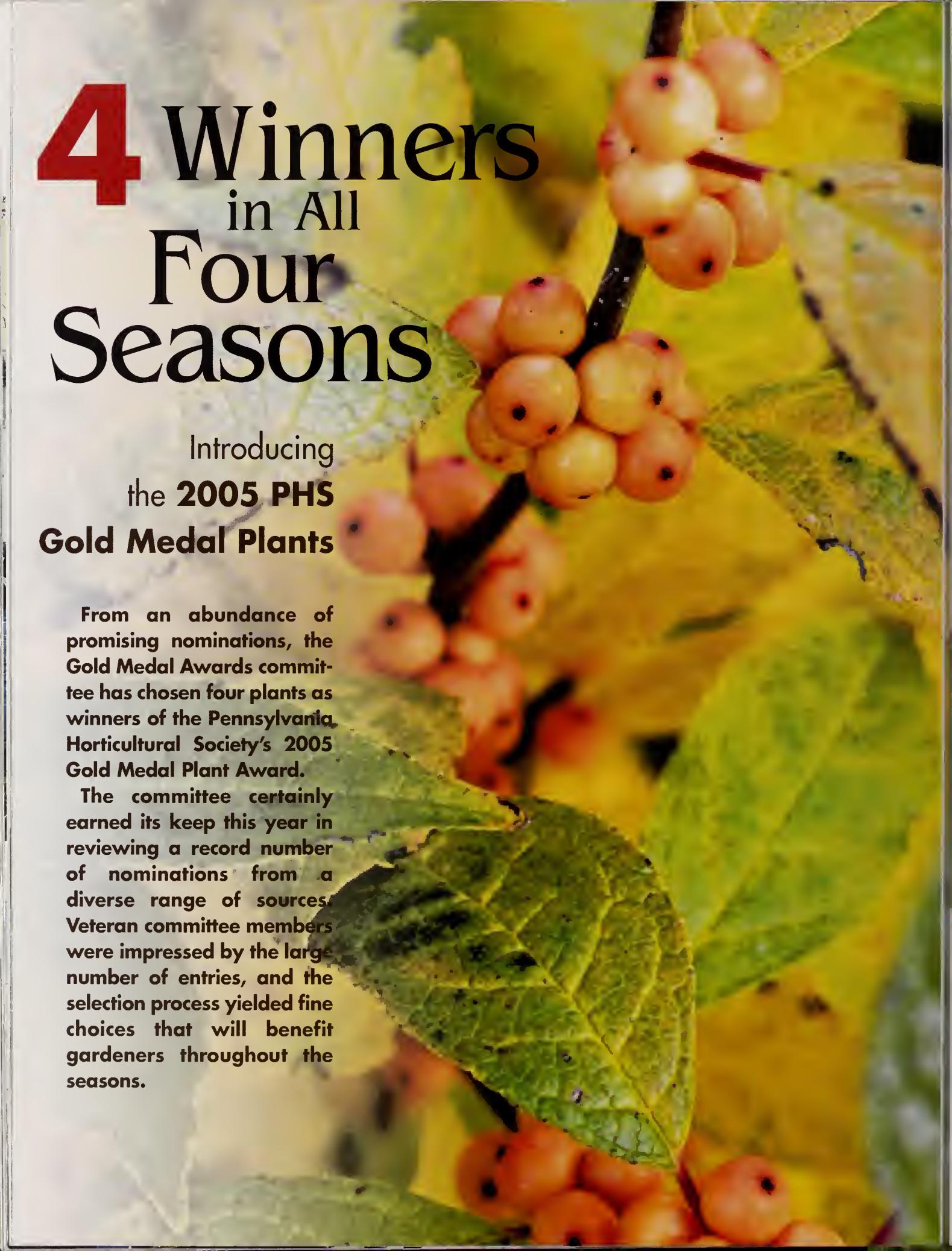
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4 Winners in All Four Seasons



Introducing
the **2005 PHS**
Gold Medal Plants

From an abundance of promising nominations, the Gold Medal Awards committee has chosen four plants as winners of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's 2005 Gold Medal Plant Award.

The committee certainly earned its keep this year in reviewing a record number of nominations from a diverse range of sources. Veteran committee members were impressed by the large number of entries, and the selection process yielded fine choices that will benefit gardeners throughout the seasons.



TREE:

Abies koreana (Korean Fir)

The distinctive foliage and form of this somewhat small-statured tree can provide a fresh combination of beauty and functionality for the home landscape. This evergreen conifer ranges up to 30 feet high by about 15 feet wide in a garden setting, featuring a broadly pyramidal, compact shape. The many positive attributes of Korean fir give us a great alternative to the more common and overused palette of coniferous specimen trees.

Environmental adaptability is an important aspect in tree selection, and though it may not always be suitable for urban sites, *Abies koreana* has the ability to thrive in our region without special care. It is well suited for sunny locations, but light shade is also acceptable. Preferred soil conditions are moist, well drained sites with acidic to neutral pH levels. No disease problems have been reported and there is only a slight susceptibility to scale and spider mite. More importantly to many of us, Korean fir is reportedly deer resistant.

The growth rate of this tree is somewhat slow, but as compensation, it requires no pruning. An added bonus is the vibrant violet-colored cones that it produces, even at a young age, with rich green foliage as a backdrop throughout the year.

Abies koreana has the potential to play an important role as a specimen tree for the home landscape.

SHRUB:

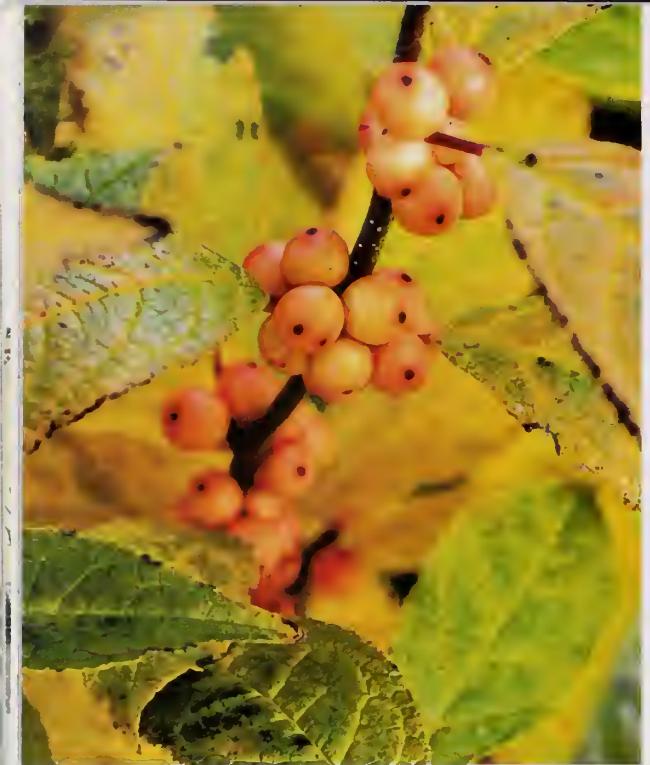
Calycanthus floridus 'Michael Lindsey' (Sweetshrub)

Highlighting the importance of native plants for the home landscape, this sweetshrub—also known as Carolina allspice—is one of three North American natives among this year's award winners. The popularity of *Calycanthus* dates back to colonial times, due to its delightful floral fragrance contrasting with a rugged disposition.

The variety 'Michael Lindsey' was selected and introduced by Allen Bush of Fletcher, North Carolina. It is considered superior to other cultivars of the same species for its consistent vigor yet compact habit, the improved luster and texture of leaf surface, and best of all, the reliability of that classic sweetshrub fragrance. The reddish brown flowers release their fruity fragrance, described as a sweet, strawberry-pineapple, throughout the day beginning in May and continuing sporadically into June and July.

This plant ultimately grows 6 to 8 feet tall and wide with a rounded form. *Calycanthus* adapts easily to sun or bright shade, in addition to almost all soil conditions, whether acid or alkaline. Known to be resistant to insects and disease, the wavy textured foliage remains attractive throughout the growing season and develops fine fall color that is rich yellow to gold.

Still somewhat rare in the nursery trade, 'Michael Lindsey' sweetshrub is worth searching for until the supply becomes more plentiful.



SHRUB:
***Ilex verticillata* 'Winter Gold'**
(Winterberry)

A unifying theme of this year's broadleaf award winners is the color golden yellow. 'Winter Gold' transitions from fall through winter with an abundance of glowing yellow berries tinged pinkish-orange. The Gold Medal program has showcased a number of winterberries in the past, and now we have a worthy addition to expand the color range of this increasingly popular group of plants.

The uncommon color of the berries is enhanced by their extended time on display, usually lasting until early spring, since these fruits are some of the last to be eaten by wildlife. 'Winter Gold' provides a stunning show with bare branches bearing loads of berries that warm up the winter landscape.

This carefree plant has a multi-stemmed habit with a rounded profile reaching a size of 7 to 8 feet tall and wide. As a North American native, it has nothing serious in the way of insects or disease and grows in all soils, preferring moist or even wet, acidic conditions. 'Winter Gold' thrives in full sun or bright shade, with the best quantity of berries in the most sun.

The critical requirement for berry production is a male pollinator plant. Like all winterberries, a male companion with a corresponding bloom period is necessary. For 'Winter Gold', the correct choice is 'Southern Gentleman'. Fulfilling this plant's one demand will provide a winter of golden treasure.



VINE:
***Gelsemium sempervirens* 'Margarita'**
(Carolina Jessamine)

The fourth winning selection for 2005, a hardy, native Carolina jessamine vine, completes the seasonal cycle. The bright, funnel-form flowers of 'Margarita' exemplify the golden-yellow theme of three of this year's winners. As an added bonus, the blooms that cover the twining stems are lightly fragrant.

The versatility of this plant offers solutions to a number of landscape issues. Sited in full sun or, as often seen in its native habitat, partial to full shade, 'Margarita' can be useful in a number of ways. It grows as a twining vine on trellises, arbors, and fences, and its cascading stems become a sprawling groundcover for embankments. Since it does not cling to surfaces, it requires open upright support such as chain link or lattice, where its stems can grow to its ultimate size of 8 to 15 feet long. The glossy, green foliage persists through winter, being more or less evergreen according to conditions.

Carolina jessamine is a deer-proof plant and has no significant insect or disease problems. Its growth rate is moderate and, though it has a preference for moist, acidic soils, 'Margarita' adapts to all but the harshest sites.

Here is a plant that homeowners can put to work in a variety of settings, as well as a welcome addition to the vine category of Gold Medal Award winners. 

Steve Mostardi is general manager of Mostardi Nursery in Newtown Square, PA (phone: 610-356-8035, web: www.mostardi.com). He is a Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist, serving PHS as a member of its Gold Medal Plant Award Committee.

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10 Trees for Fabulous FALL COLOR

By Ilene Sternberg

Fall doesn't fall all at once in the Delaware Valley. Sunny days and cool, crisp, lengthening nights herald a succession of color changes in the local landscape, featuring flaming dogwoods for the overture and those invasive but vibrant yellow Norway maples for a grand finale. This progressive pageant can be choreographed for your own surroundings if you select some of the best trees for fall display. Consider these:

Right: Black gum

Opposite page left to right:

Sassafras

American smoketree

Shadbush



American Smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*)

The pink-bronze spring foliage of this tree turns dusky green in summer, then shades of lemon, amber, red, orange and red-violet, often simultaneously, in fall. Its airy, pink-lavender flower panicles give the fascinating illusion of puffs of smoke. Common smokebush (*C. coggygria*), its foreign purple-leaved cousin, has cultivars 'Royal Purple' and 'Velvet Cloak,' which can be cut to the ground yearly, forcing bright new leaves for contrast in shrub or perennial borders. They have fibrous roots, are easily transplanted, and are adaptable to drought and inhospitable soils. Prefers sun.

Shadbush (*Amelanchier* sp.)

Shadbush goes by incalculable other names, due to its ubiquity and promiscuous interbreeding. Mourning cloak butterflies feed on *Amelanchier* nectar, and its delicate white blossoms brighten up the early

spring. Later, you'll have to battle the birds for reddish fruits that turn purple and increasingly sweet; they can be eaten fresh or cooked, canned, frozen, baked into pies, or made into jellies, juice or wine. Plains Indians prized the shadbush, using fruits for soups, stews, and pemmican (a patty of beef jerky, berries and fat); trading dried berries; and making arrows from its wood. This shrub or tree has radiant fall color, from yellow to bronze-red, and prefers acid soil; it grows 15 to 25 feet high.

Sourwood (*Oxydendrum arboreum*)

"Sour" refers to this plant's lemony-tasting leaves. A Pennsylvania native, it likes acid, peaty soil and sun and resents pollution. Its shiny green leaves turn autumnal orange, crimson, or claret against silver gray bark. Summer-blooming, fragrant, long white racemes resembling lilies-of-the-valley form capsules that persist on branch tips as winter jewelry. This plant is ornamental

in all seasons and grows slowly, from 20 to 60 feet. A beekeeper's delight, sourwood yields the Rolls Royce of honeys.

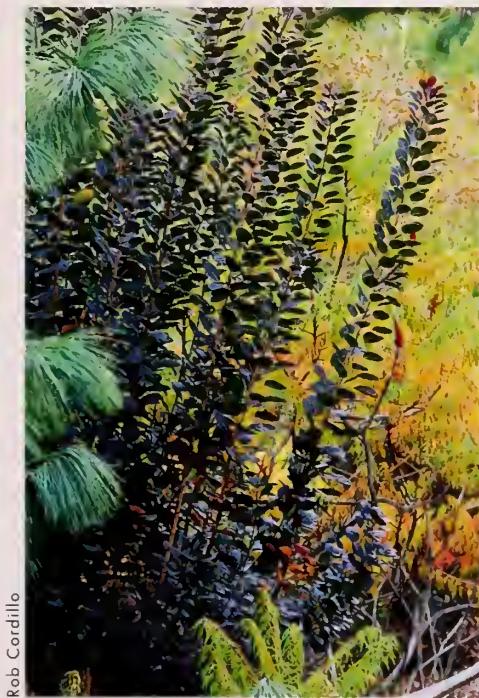
Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*)

This "nymph of the forest" ("Nyssa" being a Greek woodland sprite) turns early from lustrous dark green to brilliant ruby. Considered one of the loveliest native trees for consistent fall color, it attains a height of 30 to 60 feet at a slow-to-medium rate. Many bird species relish the half-inch-long blue/black fruits that appear on female trees in September and October.

This tree is a challenge to transplant because of its long taproot; plant balled-and-burlapped or container-grown specimens in spring. Choose a spot in full sun with well-drained acidic soil and prune it in the autumn. Note that female black gum trees can be messy on pavement, once they drop their fruit.



Frederick H. Roy



Rob Cordillo



Frederick H. Roy



Rob Cordillo



Rob Cordillo



Frederick H. Ray

Sugar Maple

(*Acer saccharum*)

One of the best large shade trees, even in poor soils, the sugar maple usually tops out at 50 to 70 feet but can achieve 120 feet. Settlers learned how to tap trees for syrup from Native Americans, who probably observed the techniques of the gray squirrel. Its foliage becomes a luminous carmine to glowing yellow against the charcoal trunk. It likes fresh air, room to grow, moist, fertile soil, and a smoke-free environment.

Sassafras

(*Sassafras albidum*)

Single, double, and triple-lobed leaves on each tree turn luminescent scarlet, orange,

and sulfur in autumn. Females bear drapes of beady blue fruits on long stalks, which are savored by birds. The taproot and lateral roots quickly reach 30 to 60+ feet, making transplanting difficult (container-grown is best). Once established, they naturalize well, forming a grove in moist, acid, well-drained soil in sun or light shade. An old story credits sassafras for having aided in the discovery of America. Supposedly, the wind-borne fragrance of the trees enabled Columbus to persuade his mutinous crew that land was near. Once considered a New World wonder drug, Native Americans and Jamestown colonists turned a quick profit dealing root bark, oil, and other sassafras products to Europeans. The leaves are still ground to make filé powder, a thickening agent for Creole cookery.

Dawn Redwood

(*Metasequoia glyptostroboides**)

A deciduous conifer, the dawn redwood has green feathery leaves that turn coral pink, then rust before dropping. Described from fossil records, the tree had been considered extinct until the early 1940s, when living specimens were discovered growing wild in China. Collected seeds were shared with arboreta and important public gardens, including Longwood, Winterthur, and the Morris Arboretum, which now exhibit superlative specimens. Not for the small garden, this tree can top 140 feet. It's a litterbug, shedding twigs with little conscience, but one look at the magnificent furrowed trunk and its disciplined, pyramidal form

10 Trees for Fabulous FALL COLOR



Larry Albee

Above and inset: Stewartia

Left: Okame cherry

Opposite page clockwise from top left:

Sourwood

Sugar maple ('Bonfire')

Dawn redwood



wins ardent admirers. Dawn redwoods prefer full sun and well-drained, slightly acid soil.

Stewartia

Stewartia pseudocamellia
var. *koreana**

Stewartias not only boast great fall color, from yellow to red to purple, but also provide year-round interest with white flowers from mid-June through July and smooth, exfoliating bark particularly appreciated in

winter. Native to Japan and Korea, they reach 30 feet in our area. Give them part sun and acid soil.

Okame Cherry

(*Prunus 'Okame'**)

A cross between *P. campanulata* and *P. incisa*, this tree produces abundant pink blooms from late March to mid-April and reaches 35 feet with an upright growth habit. Its finely textured, dark green leaves turn brilliant orange in autumn.



c. 1741 Rabbit's Ferry House

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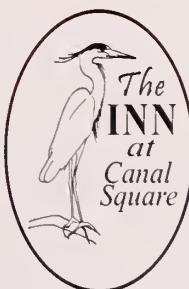
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Gingko (*Ginkgo biloba*)

Distinct among all deciduous trees, the gingko is estimated to have been on earth well over 150 million years; it is the last surviving member of its genus. Bright green fan-shaped leaves resembling those of a maidenhair fern turn a brilliant, clear yellow in fall, and at the first hard freeze, fall they do. Like some wanton stripper, it drops all clothing in one fell swoop, forming a primrose puddle at its feet. Male trees are often recommended, as fruits are messy and notoriously malodorous. But gingkos don't bear fruit for 20-50 years, and males are heavy pollen producers, unhealthy for allergy-prone people. 'Fairmount' is an excellent narrow, upright conical cultivar selected from a tree still standing in Fairmount Park. It reaches 50 to 80+ feet at a slow-to-medium pace. A true survivor, the gingko is adaptable and tolerant.

Oh! And don't overlook other stars of the arboreal world, like the *Franklinia*, or the best bets among ashes, oaks, hickories, fringe trees, birches, and willows. Okay, so I lied—that's way more than 10. Math never was my strong suit, but you'll love all these fall favorites anyway. Try a few and enjoy the fall fiesta of colors. 

*PHS Gold Medal Plants

10 Trees for Fabulous FALL COLOR



Alan and Linda Detrick

Left: Ginkgo

MORE GREAT MAPLES

There are also exceptional and highly adaptable non-native maples with great fall foliage, such as **paperbark maple*** (*Acer griseum*) from China. This small (20 to 30 feet), trouble-free, sun-loving tree has splendid exfoliating cinnamon-stick bark and russet autumn leaves. Its close relative from Korea and Manchuria, the **three-flower maple*** (*Acer triflorum*), prefers acid soil and light shade, tops out at 25 feet, and presents a saffron to red-orange leaf show in fall.

Japanese maples usually offer superb harvest-time hues ranging from yellow or orange to startling red and deep maroon. Lacy foliage on cutleaf forms confers year-round delicate beauty. Some slowly attain a mere 3 feet, while others grow as tall as 50 feet. Weeping and upright forms may be cultivated as elegant multi-stemmed shrubs or refined, aristocratic single-trunk trees. They can also be grown in containers. Japanese maples prefer well-drained soil high in organic matter and protection from wind and late-spring frost. Full sun or dappled shade yield better color and growth. Provide extra moisture under summer sun and during drought.

Two outstanding cultivars are ***Acer palmatum* 'Tamukeyama'**** and ***Acer palmatum* 'Waterfall'****. 'Tamukeyama' reaches 6 feet in height with a 12-foot spread in 20 years, showing deep crimson, dissected leaves that mature to purple-red throughout the summer into fall. 'Waterfall', 12 feet tall by 18 feet wide at adulthood, has a cascading habit and large, deeply-lobed, filigreed foliage that turns gold suffused with vermillion.

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The Botanical Legacy of

Story by Richard M. McCourt and Earle E. Spamer, The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia

If you haven't noticed the recent buzz about the Lewis and Clark expedition, you haven't been paying attention. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the monumental journey, and all over the country, people are rediscovering Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, along with everything they saw and experienced.

A quick Google search on "Lewis and Clark" yields more than 1.2 million results, books are flying off the shelves (there are at least three on Meriwether Lewis's dog alone), campers and hikers are pitching their tents over Lewis and Clark sites as revealed by mercury tailings left in privy sites (mercury was a nineteenth-century treatment for venereal disease), and museum exhibits are set to travel the country, including one at Philadelphia's Academy of Natural Sciences in November.



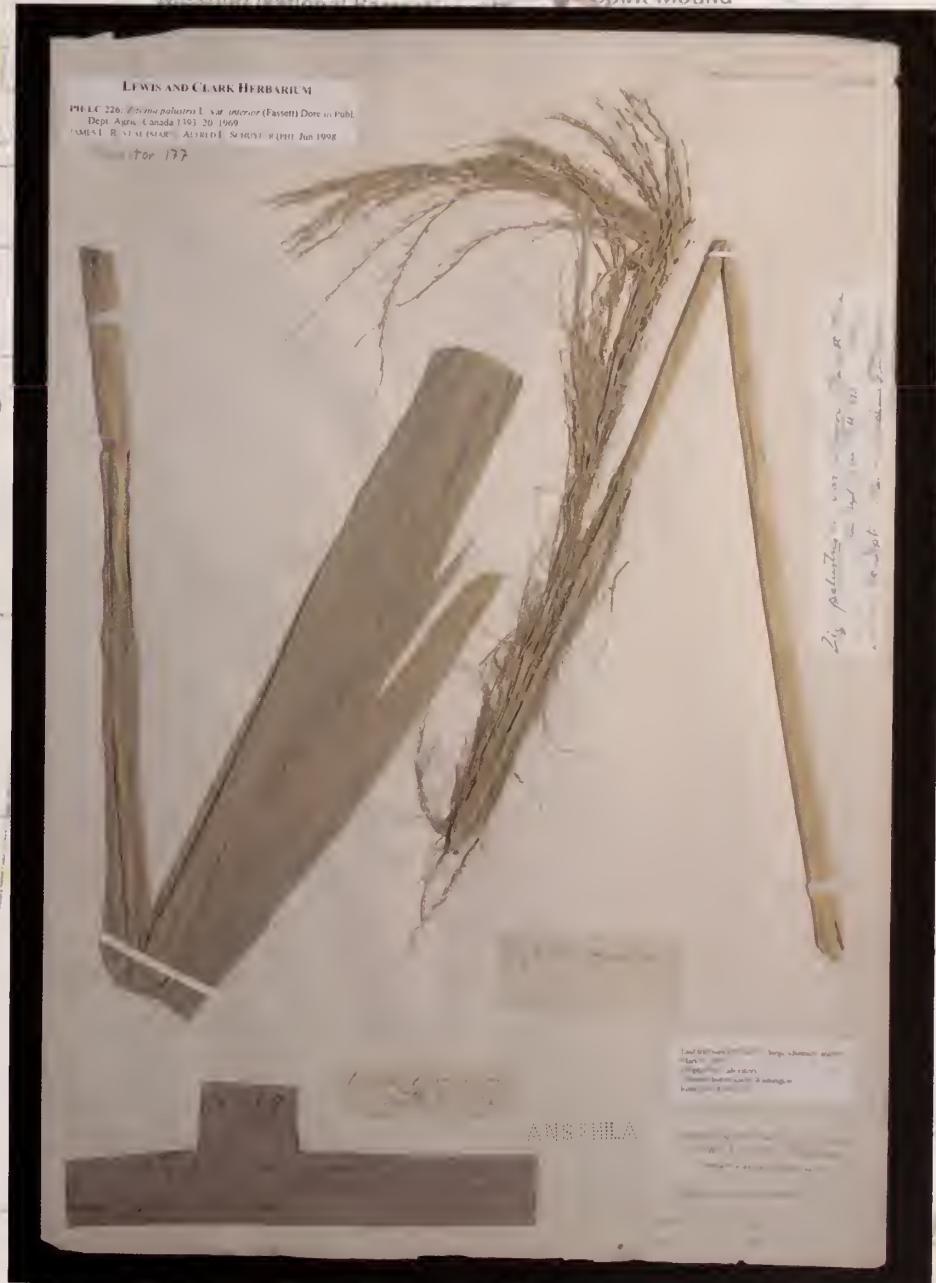
Meriwether Lewis



William Clark

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LEWIS AND CLARK

Still, few people know about the botanical legacy of these explorers, which comprises the richest trove of natural-history specimens and knowledge resulting from the famed expedition. The Lewis and Clark Herbarium, housed at the Academy of Natural Sciences, includes hundreds of pressed plants collected by the explorers. The story of how this collection made its way to Philadelphia is almost as captivating as that of the two-and-a-half-year journey itself.

Lewis Comes To Philadelphia

Meriwether Lewis was no novice when it came to natural history. He had grown up in Virginia and Georgia, hunting, fishing, and reading about the voyages of Captain Cook. He learned about plants from his mother, Lucy Marks, who used herbs in ministering to ailing neighbors. As a sol-

dier, he had traveled widely and knew the familiar plants and animals of the eastern United States. But he lacked the formal botanical training that he would need for the expedition. President Thomas Jefferson, who personally selected Lewis to lead the expedition and instructed him to record his observations, knew that Lewis would need a crash course in botany. He also knew just where Lewis could get it—Philadelphia.

In May 1803, Lewis arrived on the western bank of the Schuylkill River just outside Philadelphia. He had spent nearly a month in Lancaster, buying rifles and learning celestial navigation from Andrew Ellicott, an accomplished astronomer and mathematician. In Philadelphia he would buy yet more equipment and supplies and, just as important, study and prepare for the journey.

Philadelphia was the largest city in the nation at the time (population 45,000) and home to America's first scientific association, the American Philosophical Society, as well as the University of Pennsylvania. Among Lewis's mentors was Benjamin Smith Barton, the first professor of Botany and Natural History at Penn and the author of the first botany textbook in the U.S. He taught Lewis how to identify, describe, and collect plants and gave him lessons in pressing and drying specimens.

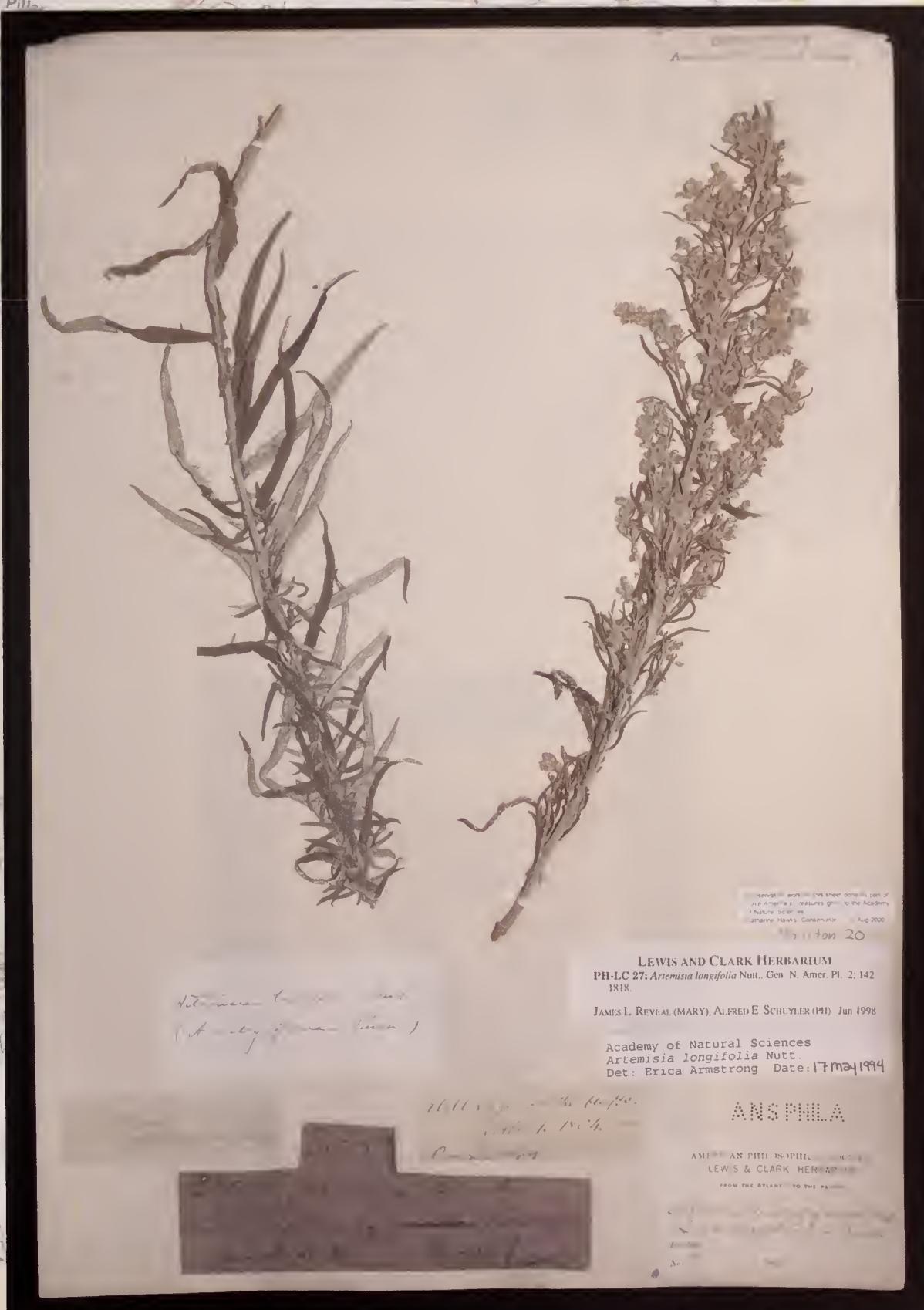
The Journey

The training paid off. Lewis collected and preserved upwards of 200 plant specimens. The exact number will never be known, because floods washed away several caches of plants buried along the Missouri River. He also commented on many more plants in journals, but because those parts of the journals were not published for nearly a century, his comments, while interesting historically, did not have the scientific impact of the collections themselves. After all, by the time Lewis and Clark's observations were in print, naturalist Thomas Nuttall and others had explored and collected along the Missouri River and West Coast of North America, and Lewis and Clark's journals were, literally, history. We can only tally the existing plant specimens and briefly recount their long, strange trip.

Lewis and Clark and their crew, known as the Corps of Discovery, traversed approximately 8,000 miles, mostly along the Missouri and Columbia Rivers, with memorably difficult treks over the Rocky Mountains and a lengthy stay on the Pacific Coast at Fort Clatsop. The first dated botanical specimen from the expedition was *Equisetum arvense*, collected in late summer of 1804 on the Missouri River near Decatur, Nebraska. An original tag, written by Lewis on red-purple blotting paper, reads, "growth of the sand bars near

Named for the explorers, here are examples of *Lewisia* (below) and *Clarkia* (right).





Artemesia longifolia

LEWIS AND CLARK

the banks of the river—taken the 10th of August 1804."

The last dated specimen was collected September 14, 1806, just nine days before they returned to St. Louis. In all, 232 plant specimens survive today. Besides those lost in the flooded caches, we know that 60 were sent back to Thomas Jefferson early on from Fort Mandan, in North Dakota, before the expedition pushed westward to the Rocky Mountains in 1805. From those 60, only 30 were accounted for by the time the rest of the plants arrived in Philadelphia in 1807. The missing 30 are today, inexplicably, lost.

In 1807 Lewis returned to Philadelphia to work with his old mentor Benjamin Smith Barton and others who promised to help him prepare a scientific volume to accompany publication of the expedition journals. Barton ultimately reneged on his offer of help, and none of these were published in Lewis's lifetime. On the trip back to Philadelphia, however, Lewis was put in touch with Frederick Traugott Pursh, a plant collector for Barton and others up and down the eastern seaboard. Pursh would soon become a significant figure in the legacy of Lewis and Clark's botanical collection.

Through the Hands of Pursh and Lambert

Born the same year as Lewis (1774) in the German province of Saxony, Frederick Traugott Pursh was a highly trained and ambitious botanist. Lewis paid him \$70 to do what he could not: study the specimens, identify new species, make drawings, and prepare the material for

publication. This Pursh did after Lewis gave him all the plant specimens he had brought back, as well as half the shipment he had sent from Fort Mandan.

Pursh worked on the material for more than a year. Meanwhile, Lewis was appointed governor of the Louisiana Territory and became entrenched in other activities. Pursh gave the specimens to Bernard McMahon, a prominent Philadelphia horticulturist who was eagerly interested in their gardening potential. He germinated seeds from the collection and sent seeds to others who did the same. Lewis never did return to Philadelphia, and Pursh gave up waiting and left for New York in early 1809.

Later that year, Lewis died mysteriously on the Natchez Trace trail in Tennessee; some believe he committed suicide, while others claim it was murder. William Clark, co-leader of the expedition, returned to Philadelphia and retrieved the specimens from McMahon, only to hand them over to Barton. This might have been the death knell of any scientific write-up, because Barton was ailing and distracted and never published his work on the collection. But Pursh still had his notes and drawings, along with something else that no one knew about: a batch of Lewis specimens comprising a quarter of the whole collection, which he secretly took with him when he left Philadelphia.

Some might call it theft, others an unapproved loan, but it was a propitious pilfering for the literature of botany. Pursh took his materials to London and, with the sponsorship of botanist Aylmer Lambert, he wrote the two-volume landmark, *Flora Americae Septentrionalis*. In this book, Pursh discussed 132 Lewis and Clark specimens. He named several plants after the explorers, including *Lewisia rediviva* and *Clarkia pulchella*, and gave Lewis the credit due him as an explorer and collector.

Pursh eventually left London and Lambert's patronage and returned to North America, to Montreal, where he died penniless in 1820. Lewis's collections stayed in England with Lambert until that gentleman died in 1842. His entire herbarium of some 50,000 specimens was auctioned off in his parlor that year. Among the many bidders was a young man who came to play a major role in the history of the collection.



An illustration of *Clarkia pulchella* by Pursh.



Tuckerman & Meehan: Saving the Collection

Edward Tuckerman, later a famous lichenologist, was taking his Grand Tour of Europe when he chanced upon the Lambert auction and—on a “venture,” as he put it—bought a box labeled “North American Plants” for 5 pounds 10 shillings. He hit the jackpot. The box contained almost all the Lewis and Clark/Pursh plants, not to mention collections by Nuttall, John Fraser, and others. (Another box, purchased by William Pamplin, contained 10 Lewis and Clark specimens mixed with hundreds of others. These 10 ended up at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, outside London.) Tuckerman returned with his purchase to America and, in 1856, sent the specimens to the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia for safekeeping. His letter of donation was tucked away in the archives.

Aside from the 10 specimens at Kew, the Lewis and Clark collections were finally all in the same city, but it would be another 40 years before anyone noticed. Indeed, no one knew where the bulk of the Lewis specimens were kept and no one bothered to ask, until 1896, when Academy botanist Thomas Meehan received a tip that some specimens studied by Pursh in the 1800s might be stored at the American Philosophical Society. Sure enough, a search by Meehan turned up Lewis's collections, still in the same bundles in which Pursh had left them. Barton, with whom Clark had left more specimens, died in 1815 and left his scientific estate to the American Philosophical Society. The historic collection sat in boxes undisturbed for 86 years.

Thomas Meehan eagerly set to work documenting the plants, and in just four months, he wrote a paper describing all the Lewis plants and applying what were then the correct names. He transcribed Lewis's

collection data, which was sometimes woefully brief. For example, plants were recorded as being from “the Great rapids of the Columbia” or “on the bluffs.” In short order, Elliott Coues, who had recently completed a revised edition of the Lewis and Clark journals, supplied a companion paper that used collection dates and his own knowledge of flora and fauna of the western states to pinpoint where the plants had been collected.

By the time the centennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition rolled around, the botanical results of the journey had been published, and, after some circuitous travels, the specimens had been reunited in Philadelphia (except for the 10 remaining at Kew). The Philosophical Society loaned Barton's portion of the collection to the Academy to join the Lambert portion.

The Collection Today

All together, the Lewis and Clark Herbarium includes 222 specimen sheets, containing approximately 178 species. In addition to the plants that Lewis actually collected, a few garden specimens grown from his seeds also have been found. Almost all of Lewis's specimens are vascular plants, although he also gathered a moss, a liverwort, and a seaweed. Four state flowers and one state grass are represented.

All in all, given the rigors of the expedition, the travails of the principals and of the plants themselves—ferried to and fro across the Atlantic as they were—the mere fact that we have specimens at all to enjoy is a bicentennial treasure worth celebrating. 

The Lewis and Clark National Bicentennial Exhibition will be on display at the Academy of Natural Science in Philadelphia from November 6th to March 20th. More information is available online at www.acnatsci.org/, or by phone at 215-299-1000.



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Judy Glattstein is an enthusiastic gardener, author, and lecturer who appreciates bulbs as "plants in a package." You can visit her website at www.bellewoodgardens.com.

Rob Cardillo

A BOUNTY of BULBS

by Judy Glattstein

Sur la Table

BULBS. THE WORD EVOKEs IMAGES OF PRETTY FLOWERS and sweeping Dutch landscapes, but consider how bland our kitchens would be without those not-so-pretty bulbs—onions, garlic, shallots and leeks. For as long as people have been gardening, plants have migrated from the vegetable patch to the flower border and back again. Once considered poisonous, tomatoes were cultivated as ornamentals. Incas grew dahlias as a food crop, and Jack-in-the-Pulpit tubers were baked in the ashes of fire pits and eaten by Native Americans.



Photos by Judy Glattstein

Today, we grow a diversity of bulbs in the flower garden that, at different times and in different places, have been used as food. Take the apocryphal story about a tulip in the early days of tulip mania in Holland, in the seventeenth century. A seaman, noticing what looked like a nice fat onion at a merchant's warehouse, sliced it up and ate it on his sardine sandwich. No onion, it was a rare, flame-patterned tulip worth a fortune. The Dutch ate tulips during the *hongerwinter* (hunger winter) of 1944-1945, during the German occupation in World War II. A pamphlet pub-

lished in January 1945 suggested that eight bulbs made a goodly serving. Prepared by removing the papery brown tunic, each bulb was cut in half and the immature yellow shoot inside removed. Bulbs were boiled and mashed, or the scales were separated and roasted into tulip chips or ground and dried into a coarse meal.

In *Cannery Row*, John Steinbeck writes about Doc's birthday party. Among the gifts were some lily bulbs that were eaten. Tiger lily (*Lilium lancifolium*, syn. *L. tigrinum*) has long been a popular food item, cultivated as a vegetable in Japan and China. The tiger lily is the Typhoid Mary of the lily world, capable of vigorous growth even when infected with lily mottle virus. Prudence suggests that you grow this species alone, or grow others and not this species. Other lilies that have been grown for food include Madonna lily, *L. candidum*, *L. speciosum*, *L. pardalinum*, and others.

Camas (*Camassia esculenta*), pictured at right, was an important food for Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest, who fought over the gathering rights to the wet meadows where this bulb, with its spikes of star-like blue flowers, grew. Sacajawea introduced this food to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark during their Western expedition. New foods, however, should be eaten in moderation, lest they result in intestinal upsets, as confirmed in Clark's diary entry of September 20, 1805: "I find myself very unwell all the evening from eating fish & roots too freely." And, should you be gathering in the wild, keep in mind that bulbs of edible camas look very much like those of *Zigadenus*, so poisonous that all species of the genus bear the common name of death camas.

Ramps (*Allium tricoccum*) are a common Eastern woodland member of the

onion family. Also known as wild leeks, they send up pairs of oval green leaves in spring followed by naked stalks of white flowers after the leaves wither away. Each spring there are ramp festivals in the Appalachian Mountains, and quantities of this garlicky bulb are eaten with gusto. It's said that they protect against the common cold—possibly because the smell is sufficiently pungent that no one comes close enough to spread any germs.

Finally, in the famed cookbook, *Larousse Gastronomique*, one passage mentions that dahlia tubers are edible and taste similar to Jerusalem artichokes. Indeed, at the end of the day, the herbaceous border and a potager might have more in common than you think. 



by Carolyn Walker

Carolyn Walker owns Carolyn's Shade Garden in Bryn Mawr, PA, where she maintains seven acres of shady display areas. She can be reached at carolynsshadegardens@verizon.net or 610-525-4664.



Toad Lilies

WHEN SHADE GARDENERS THINK OF THE RULING CLASS of their fall gardens, Japanese anemone, cardinal flower, pink turtlehead, hardy begonia, and asters come to mind, but I nominate toad lily (*Tricyrtis* sp.) as king. When happy, most toad-lilies spread to form large clumps of upright stems loaded with orchid-like flowers. Anyone who isn't familiar with this exquisite genus should visit Chanticleer's entry courtyard in the fall to see what can only be described as a spectacular display of this plant.

There are 18 species of toad lily growing in rocky, organic soil on wooded mountainsides across Asia. Plants are upright to arching and generally 18 to 36 inches high, although a few are shorter. The flowers appear at the stem tips or in the leaf axils (where the leaf joins the stem) or both places for about four weeks from June to October, but generally in the fall. Most toad lily flowers are orchid-like and white or yellow, usually with contrasting spots of purple or red, but some are bell-shaped. The leaves are ornamental in their own right, as they clasp the stem in an elegant manner and are pale to shiny dark green, usually with darker spots and prominent ribbing. Often fuzzy and quite narrow, they give the entire plant a unique look.

Toad-lilies grow in part to full shade and are as suited to a formal shade garden as they are to a naturalized woodland setting. I can only comment on the culture of the varieties I grow, but mine do not require the steady moisture recommended in the literature. (Where are these 'moist woods' anyway? All I have is dry clay.) I never water my established toad-lilies, and they have thrived. Yes, occasionally the leaves turn brown at the edges, but that certainly does not justify dragging a hose around in 90-degree weather. In fact, local gardening



Left:
Tricyrtis latifolia

Below: *Tricyrtis* 'White Towers' in Carolyn's shade garden.

authority Charles Cresson sent samples of his toad lilies showing this classic browning to Penn State for analysis and was told they had the fungal disease anthracnose.

If constant moisture is not essential, good drainage is, so I recommend planting them on a slight incline. During the very wet years of 2003 to 2004, I lost every toad lily that wasn't on a slope, including a 12-year-old stand. I also recommend planting them with plenty of compost and mulching yearly with ground leaves. The toad-lilies in books "resent disturbance", but mine are easily divided anytime. Like many perennials in the lily family, each stalk can be separated and replanted. Unfortunately, toad-lilies are a favorite of deer, rabbits, and slugs.

I have had very good luck with three toad-lilies that I especially recommend. *Tricyrtis latifolia* has upright stems 24 to 36 inches long. The ovate leaves are medium green and glabrous with little to no spotting. They can be 6 inches long and 4 inches wide. The exquisite flowers, yellow with reddish brown spots, appear at the stem tips and in the upper

axils. I counted 14 buds on one tip, which seems typical. Unlike most toad-lilies, *Tricyrtis latifolia* blooms in June.

Tricyrtis 'White Towers' grows 18 to 24 inches tall and has an upright form. The leaves are very fuzzy, adding a tactile dimension to the enjoyment of this plant, and are narrow and medium green with darker spots. The flowers appear at the stem tips and axils in September and October and look like pure white orchids. The leaves and habit of *Tricyrtis hirta* 'Miyazaki' are very similar to 'White Towers', but its flowers are white with violet spots. 'Miyazaki' thrives in my garden.

Choose toad-lilies to extend your garden's allure into the heart of fall; you won't regret introducing this king of shade dwellers to your repertoire. 



Photos by Carolyn Walker

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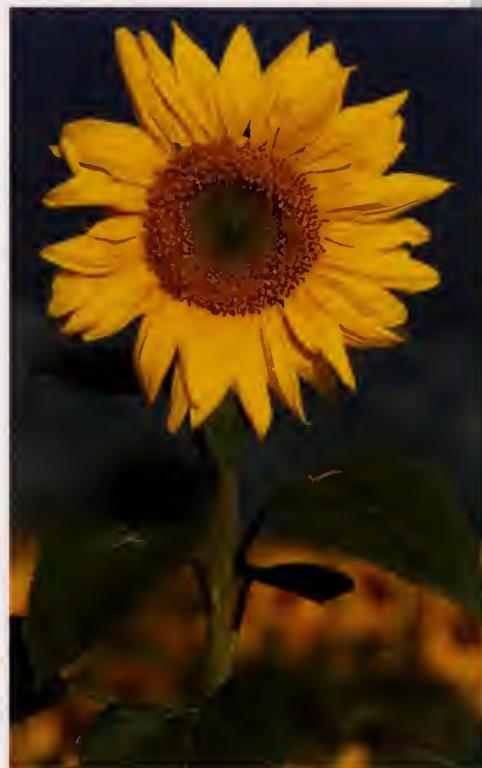
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What to See Now

Asters, goldenrod and yarrow are in bloom now at Eastern State Penitentiary, as well as many ornamental grasses.

You can catch the final blooms of the **buddleja, coreopsis** and **nepeta**. (Volunteers deadhead during the growing season to encourage re-blooming.)

Boston ivy and **Virginia creeper** are in full fall glory.

Viburnums are putting on a show; Prune-leaf viburnum is a blazing orange-red and the blue fruits are very ornamental.

Finally, the **rose hips** are huge and also very showy.

By Patricia McLaughlin

From Ricci Andeer's desk at Bookhaven, the used-book store she manages with her husband, she has a clear view of the west end of the Eastern State Penitentiary's front terrace on Fairmount Avenue, where 'Zephirine Drouhin' holds court. Andeer remembers when this lovely, tough-as-nails Bourbon rose was planted by an optimistic neighbor, back when the City of Philadelphia was still hoping to sell the historic site to a developer.

In those days, 'Zephirine' was at one end, and 'Sarah van Fleet', a hybrid rugosa, grew at the other, and in between—chaos, jungle, trash! Legions of multiflora roses with punishing thorns ran riot for 300 feet, along with half-grown ailanthus trees, volunteer cherries, and a whole plantation of red-stemmed pigweed, smartweed, and nut sedge.

The first big cleanup of the site yielded piles of mildewed textbooks, old socks, half-eaten lunches, beer bottles, corroded batteries, and many derelict plastic bags, one containing the remains of a dead cat. The next spring, with proceeds from bake sales, contributions from local businesses, and major organizational and material help from PHS's Philadelphia Green program, neighborhood volunteers planted a ribbon of yellow perennials along the front of the terraces and, with good intentions, sowed a mix of wildflower seeds to fill in the back.

Unfortunately, the romantic wildflower meadow proved unmanageable. You can't get a mower up on the terraces, and the volunteer weeder couldn't differentiate the dozens of weed species from the mixed wildflowers. Dick Snyder, who with his wife, Flossie, owns and runs a gym located directly across the street, remembers that the landscape "was so wild it almost looked uncultivated."

So the Penitentiary's volunteer gardeners, with design help from PHS staffers Kathryn Newland, Nancy O'Donnell and Julie Snell, added ornamental grasses and shrubs like *Buddleja* and crape myrtle to complement the swaths of *Achillea*, *Coreopsis* and *Gaillardia* along the front wall. That made it much easier for the small group of volunteers to keep the plantings looking good. These changes proved to be crucial. "If it didn't look nice, people would be discouraged," says Doreen Martin, who chairs the committee of volunteers, now celebrating its 15th anniversary.

"It's the gateway to our neighborhood," she adds. "People come up 22nd Street and it's the first thing they see."

Julie Welker, whose real estate office is in the next block of Fairmount Avenue, agrees. "It makes the whole neighborhood look better. It shows we care."

Another group of neighbors has taken charge of the north and east sides of the prison, creating a park, a garden and a dog park, with further improvements on the drawing board. A bright new coffee shop has opened across the street, and a couple of nearby restaurants are expanding.

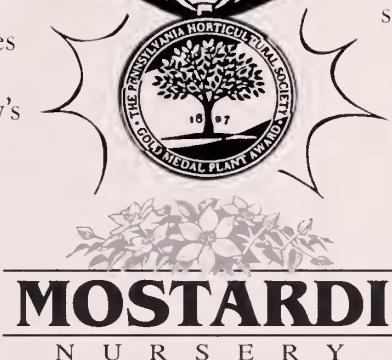
Now known as Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, the prison draws about 100,000 visitors each year. The world's first penitentiary, Eastern State was the first prison designed not just to punish but to inspire penitence in the Quaker tradition. Sarah Jane Elk, executive director of the national landmark, says that, without the volunteers, the terraces would go back to weeds. Stabilizing the huge building itself is already a financial stretch; there's no budget for landscaping.

Which may be just as well: Historical accuracy would require installation of an austere strip of boring, close-cropped grass, since the prison's architect designed it to look grim and frightening. The present landscape design, Elk says, "softens the gothic intent, which was to scare the bejeezus out of you." In other words, it's way too pretty. On the bright side, Elk says, "The flowers convey, in a way grass wouldn't, that it isn't abandoned anymore, that there's something exciting going on inside." 

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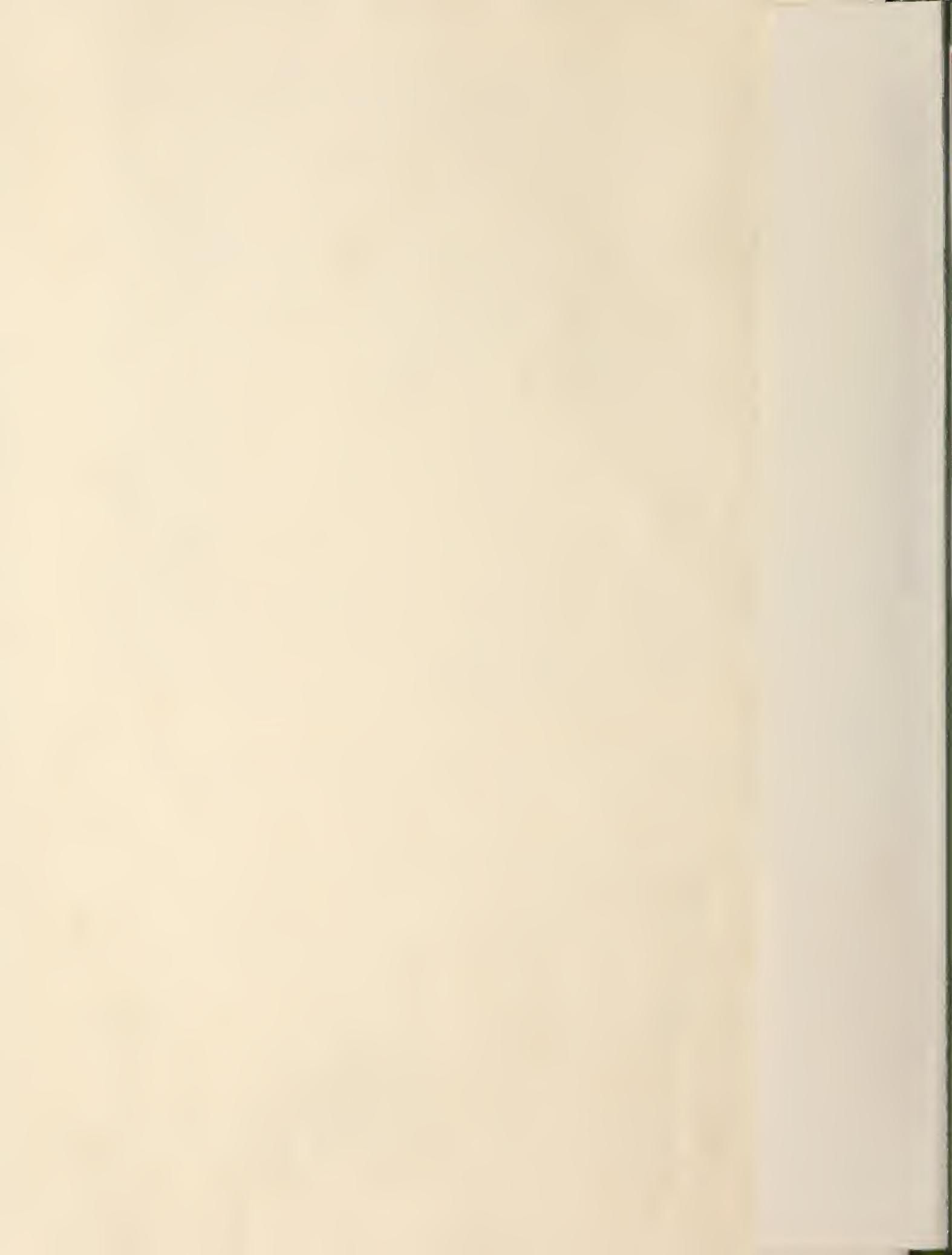


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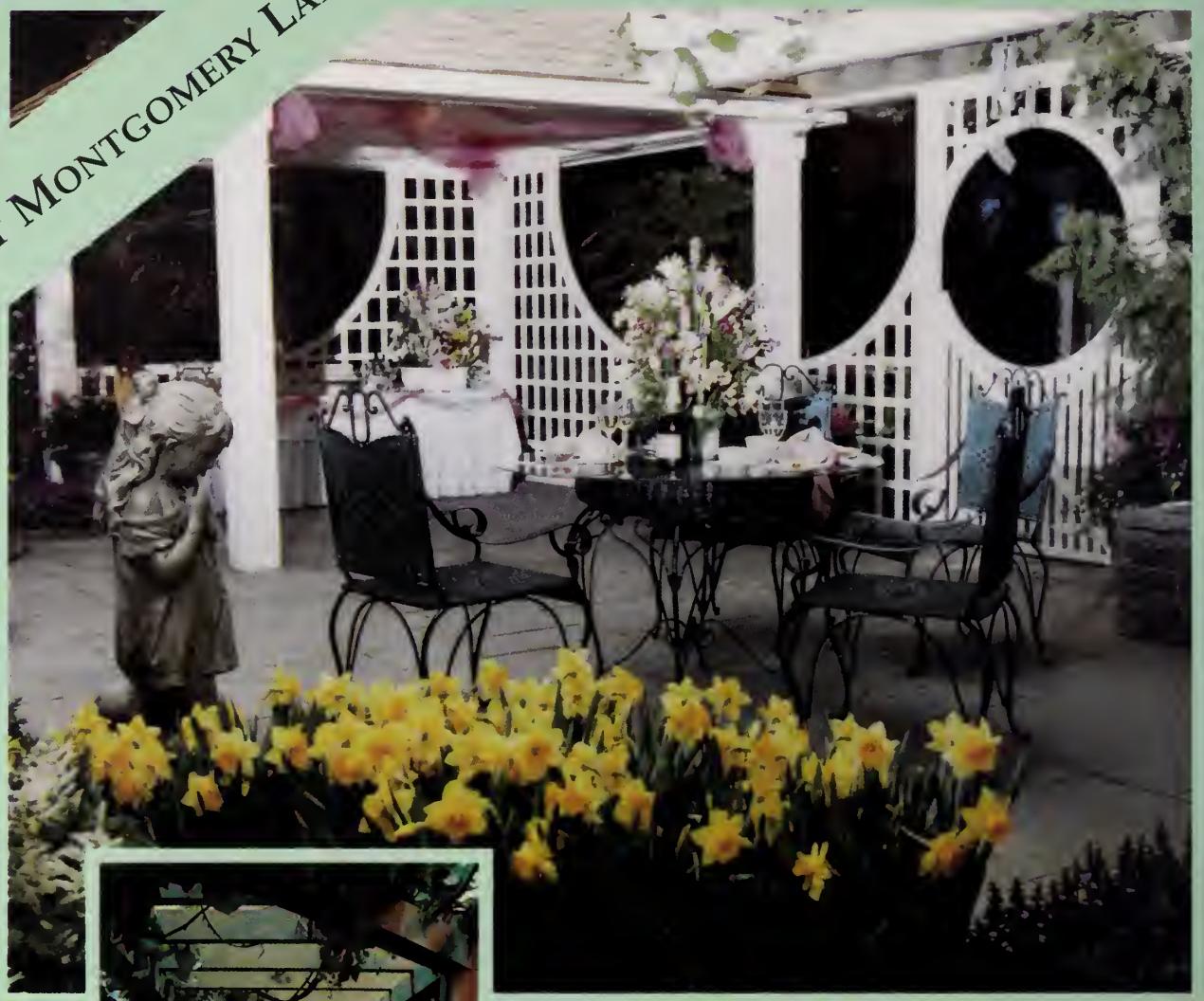
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features



12 The Plants of "Sci-Fi"

You don't have to know how to power up the Starship Enterprise to appreciate the new frontier of Bluemount Nurseries. Using biotechnology—specifically, the technique of "tissue culture"—these folks have successfully produced large-scale crops of niche plants like Venus flytraps, trilliums, and clump bamboo. Join us on a tour of the future.

16 A Pain-free Path to Wintertime Containers

Who says you can't garden during these dark, winter months? Here's an easy guide to container planting, where you not only get to thaw out your creative side but warm up your home with hints of spring to come.



20 Short Stories from the Flower Show

Ever wonder how to navigate the labyrinth of entering your plants in competition at the Flower Show? (Don't worry, it's not hard!) Or wonder what the heck a "Shipley Sprout" is? Did you know that some of the palm trees you walk by at the Philadelphia Zoo came from the Show? We could fill entire *Green Scene* issues with rare tales from this annual extravaganza. Here are but a few.

26 Healthy Water Gardens

Well, water gardening isn't *that* difficult, but it still requires a solid plan. Home water gardening expert Charles Thomas weighs in on the benefits of natural watering holes over "clear-water" ponds.



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The ART of FORCING FLOWERS

With the holidays approaching, thoughts of the Philadelphia Flower Show may be a few months away for some of us. For others, however, preparations for the Show are in full gear and gaining speed. Nowhere is this more evident than up at Meadowbrook Farm in Abington Township, PA. One of a select few growers for the Show, the crew at Meadowbrook specializes in forcing annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs and more into bloom with pinpoint accuracy, aiming precisely for the second week in March. Among the many folks they grow plants for include Burke Brothers Landscaping, Styers Nurseries, and the Garden Club of Philadelphia.

To find out more about forcing plants, I recently visited Meadowbrook for a tour of the facility with general manager John Story. Noting that they are "booked" for the 2005 Show—meaning they're growing as many plants for others that they possibly can—John led me behind their retail shop to what looked like a dry-docked truck trailer. But upon opening the door, its role became clear: it's a very large refrigerator.

"In here, we simulate winter and induce our perennials into dormancy," he notes. "The plants go in here around October 1 for between 4 to 10 weeks, depending on the species, and we maintain a constant temperature around 36°-38° F."

Once out of cold storage, the plants are moved to various greenhouses, again depending on the genus and species. At Meadowbrook Farm, there are greenhouses set at various temperatures to accommodate each plant's preference. In fact, if a plant starts to bloom too early, the crew will move it to a colder greenhouse to hold back the blossoms until Show time.

Inside the greenhouses, the magic of photosynthesis is at work, aided by modern technology. "Plants need light, air, and



heat to grow, along with water and fertilizer," John explains. "For light, we use high-intensity lamps to simulate varying amounts of daylight. These use 400-, 600- or sometimes 1,000-watt bulbs. Aside

from that, we pump CO₂ into the greenhouses. Since there isn't much of it in a sealed greenhouse during winter, this enriched air gives the plants a real boost. The difference between plants exposed to the CO₂ and those that aren't is simply enormous."

During the height of winter, John and his crew are on call 24/7 to make sure nothing damages the plants. If the oil heater fails, for example, an alarm goes off and, at night, triggers a direct phone call to John's house, and he gets up and calls the service technician. John notes, "I once had our repairman out here on Christmas morning."

When setup week arrives in early March, the Meadowbrook crew divides the plants into batches for their anxious customers, all of whom are waiting at the Pennsylvania Convention Center to finish their exhibits with these glorious flowering specimens. For four days, the crew loads truckload after truckload of plants and brings them down to the Convention Center, rain or snow, rush hour or not. One way or another, these Meadowbrook plants—now in nearly-peak bloom—will arrive on time for the Flower Show.

As our tour winds up, I ask John how many plants he's growing for the Show. He opens a database on his computer and does a quick tally. "A little over 6,000 plants this year," he says, nonchalantly. That may not be impressive to him, but for Flower Show visitors who enjoy these perfect spring blossoms a few months early, it's nothing short of a miracle. (If you would like to see this forcing process for yourself, there will be a PHS tour there on February 23. Check out the next issue of *PHS News* or our website's Calendar section for event information.)

And that, if anyone asks, is how one grows plants for the Flower Show.



Pete Brown

email: greenscene@pennhort.org

A LIME IN WINTER

By Jane Carroll

During the cold, dark days of December, many gardeners seek solace by tending their houseplants or bringing fresh evergreen boughs indoors. But there is another way to help stave off the winter blues. Citrus trees, when grown indoors, add a splash of sunshine when you need it most.

Most people think of citrus trees as something grown in the hot, sunny climate of Florida or southern California. But citrus can be grown successfully in containers in most parts of the country. Citrus trees are evergreen and must be protected during the winter. According to Adam Holland, of Acorn Springs Farms, in Hallsville, Texas,

that makes them perfect for Northeast gardeners who are looking for fragrance and color when everything else is dormant. But with citrus trees, you get more than just good looks and a pleasant aroma. You can pick your own fresh fruit without leaving home—no more slogging through the snow for your daily dose of vitamin C.

"Most people purchase citrus trees for containers so they can have something unusual on the patio," says Holland. "A lot of them don't realize the true reward until December and January. Citrus fruits generally begin ripening around October and November and look absolutely gorgeous during the holiday season."

But "citrus" applies to more than just lemons and limes; you can also grow exotics like kumquats, mandarin oranges, grapefruits, tangelos, and exotic calamondins from the Philippines. On the following page, you'll find a few basic tips from the Acorn Springs website, which offers a wealth of information on growing and caring for citrus trees.

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Indoor How-To Book

by Hazel Perper

(Dodd, Mead & Company, 1971).

The Moveable Garden:

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and out to create a carefree

year-round garden

by Ruth Shaw Ernst

(The Globe Pequot Press, 1991).

Movable Harvests:

The simplicity & bounty

of container gardens

by Chuck and Barbara Crandall

(Chapters Publishing Ltd., 1995).

SOIL

Citrus trees prefer slightly acidic soil, and it is very important that it be well-drained, since they don't like wet feet. Holland recommends a mixture of one part standard potting soil to three parts decorative pine bark nuggets. Cactus & succulent mix makes a good ready-made alternative. Give your trees adequate room to grow by planting them in a three-to-five-gallon container.

WATER

Citrus trees need regular watering, up to three to five times per week outdoors during the hot summer months, and less frequently indoors. Wait until the top one-to-three inches of soil are dry; then water thoroughly.

FERTILIZER

Citrus trees need a high-nitrogen fertilizer. Holland recommends Lutz 8-4-8.

LOCATION

During the winter, place citrus trees in a heated area near a sunny window, and keep them away from cold drafts.

PESTS

As with most houseplants, maintaining the overall health of citrus trees offers the best defense against pests. An occasional bath with a strong spray of water or insecticidal soap will help prevent most problems.

HARVESTING

Citrus fruit matures on the tree, and color and taste are the best guides to ripeness. Ripening stops once the fruit is picked, so avoid picking too soon, and if the skin gets wrinkly, you've waited too long. (A lime is actually yellow when fully ripe; commercially grown limes usually are picked before they are ripe.)

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GETTING YOUR AMARYLLIS TO REBLOOM

by Ilene Sternberg

Below: 'Amigo'

Getting a flourishing *Hippeastrum* (the botanical name for amaryllis) to give a repeat performance is not an impossible accomplishment. In fact, the longer you keep your amaryllis plant, the bigger its bulbs grow, making for an even better floral reward.

People seem to have differing rituals to spur repeat bloom. Ray Rogers, who shows spectacular specimens at the Philadelphia

Flower Show each year, has his own program, which he says works best with miniature amaryllis, but the same method applies to large amaryllis, too.

After the blooms fade, cut the stem a few inches above its base. Over the years, a single bulb will become a clump and fill the pot with fleshy roots. Without damaging them, re-pot the bulb or clump after the blooms fade, leaving no more than 1 to 2



inches between it and the pot rim and keeping half to one third of the bulbs' height above the soil line. Ray uses 10-52-10 fertilizer and repots them using about one third of the plant's original soil (preferably sterilized, or at least with visible insects evicted) with two thirds commercial potting mix. This latter mix can be made grittier by adding Turface (a soil modifier) or pumice to enhance drainage, eschewing the "peaty mess" in which pre-potted amaryllis are often sold. For a more dramatic display, plant three or more bulbs of the same variety together in one larger pot. All containers must have drainage holes.

Grow plant in a warm, bright location for several months. You may even get a second flowering. Water regularly, keeping soil moist, never soggy. Apply time-release fertilizer or feed every week or so to charge it up for the next year. Ray's "Rebloom Rules" advise against bringing them outside in summer. Outdoors, you can't control the environment with regard to watering, and the plant is vulnerable to narcissus bulb fly, caterpillars, slugs, and fungal diseases.

Around September, reduce watering, stop fertilizing, and give the potted plant two to three months "down time." Place in a cool, dark spot (55° to 60° F), remove dead or yellow leaves, and let it rest. Don't water at all during dormancy.

Initiate regrowth by bringing the plant to a warm site (70° to 75° F). Once sprouted, a cooler location (windowsill, for instance) is fine. Less direct sun will prolong bloom. Water sparingly, increasing after shoot forms. In about eight weeks, the bulb should bloom again.

Now, wasn't that easy? 

Photos this page courtesy of The Netherlands Bulb Information Center



The amaryllis is among the easiest type of bulb to force indoors.



b l o s s o m i n g BIOTECH

Horticultural Miracles Abound at Bluemount Nurseries



Story by
Tim Smith

The term "biotech" isn't one that brings to mind beautiful, healthy garden plants; it sounds more at home in a Michael Crichton thriller. But here in the 21st century, biotechnology is becoming a regular part of our lives, including within the garden. While some have protested the use of genetically modified vegetables, the technique of "tissue culture" is a boon to growers of ornamental plants. This is largely because tissue culture is cheaper than buying nursery stock (since you're creating your own stock) and much faster than growing plants from seed (growth becomes exponential). What used to take years to produce can now be accomplished in months, often in numbers ranging from dozens to *hundreds* of thousands, even millions.

At Bluemount Nurseries in Monkton, Maryland, expert growers and lab technicians are hatching their own biotech miracle. So far, their efforts have given birth to successful large-scale productions of such niche plants as Venus flytraps, trilliums, the grass *Hakonechloa 'Aureola'*, and a clump bamboo (*Fargesia* sp.). Of this latter plant, chief financial officer Nick Pindale hopes that it "will become as popular as ornamental grass, replacing invasive forms of *Miscanthus*." In all, the lab at Bluemount hosts 26 varieties of plants.

You may remember that Bluemount was the wholesale nursery that discovered the 2002 Perennial Plant of the Year, the white *Phlox paniculata* 'David', which was found growing in the parking lot at the Brandywine Museum by Bluemount president Richard Simon. His daughter, Martha Simon Pindale, has now succeeded Richard as president and runs the nursery along with her husband, Nick.

So how does a nursery go from cultivating a natural *sport*, or mutation, like 'David' to the lab-assisted mass production of new plants? Says Nick, "A few years ago we received a grant from Carroll Community College to start a tissue-culture lab. They wanted to create a nearby research facility to help train their students, and it gave us a chance to try our hand at biotech. Since most of the expense in this field comes from the start-up costs, I doubt we could have afforded to make this move without the grant. It also takes about two to three years just to build up a large enough inventory for sale to the trade."

Photography by John Gannon



Above: Small Venus flytraps growing in a sterile jar containing a gel nutrient medium.





Left: Martha and Nick Pindale

Below: Grown via tissue culture, these variegated banana plants are now thriving in containers.



Housed in a large utility building on the nursery grounds, the Bluemount lab not only grows new plants, but also teaches students about the highly specific techniques involved. It also hosts occasional tours for garden groups. "Education is a big part of what we do," says Nick.

The lab itself encompasses three rooms. The first, the Media Room, is essentially a kitchen where *everything* is sterilized, either in a dishwasher or high-temperature autoclave. Even the plant sections are cleaned. Some herbaceous plants are immersed in a bleach solution, while woody plants might be dipped in 200-proof alcohol and then briefly set aflame in a Bunsen burner.

Next is the Transfer Station, where lab technician and researcher Bonnie Collins makes the critical cuttings for the tissue culture. She notes, "You can't just cut anywhere on a plant for the culture. It's different from plant to plant; some grow from stems, others from seeds, and others from shoots. Hosta cultures, for example, only grow from stem cuttings on the bloom stalk. It takes a lot of time and research until you can get consistent cultures from a particular genus, species or cultivar."

Finally, one enters the Growth Room, where metal racks contain small, sterilized jars, some holding up to 1,000 baby plants each. Again, the key to this kind of exponential growth is careful cutting and meticulous sterilization. Any bacterial or fungi contaminant can ruin a batch of cultures, though as Bonnie says with a grin, "We do sometimes get *spectacular* fungus growths—real science projects." The viable cultures are placed in sterilized growing gels, which contain, among other secret ingredients, nutrients to help sustain the plant. After four to eight weeks in the glass container, healthy plants are removed, re-sterilized and replanted in new sterilized medium. Eventually, the plants are individually potted, acclimatized to the outdoor environment, and made ready for sale.

Sure, the wizards of Bluemount are tinkering a bit with Mother Nature's handiwork, but the proof is in the pudding. A tour of the nursery reveals greenhouse after greenhouse full of healthy, vibrant plants that are just beginning to reach the market. Currently, you can find Bluemount plants at retail nurseries up and down the East Coast (check their website for sources).

While largely a producer of perennials and annuals for the wholesale trade, Bluemount also hosts a number of retail days, tours and other public events during the year, especially for those who want get a glimpse of the future. Indeed, this is a new kind of nursery for a new kind of century. 

Bluemount Nurseries is located at 2103 Blue Mount Road in Monkton, Maryland. You can call them at 410-329-6226 or visit the website at www.bluemount.com.

Below: A glimpse of Bluemount's retail shop.





CONTAINER no-brainer

It's getting cold outside and you, the devout gardener, are facing another four months of gardening deprivation before you can get your hands dirty again. Or are you? There are plenty of horticultural pursuits for those who like indoor plants, and the project we're going to look at here—our "container no-brainer"—is one of the easiest. So kick off your winter blues and let's have a little indoor-garden fun.

The gist of this project is simply to buy an assortment of small houseplants and arrange them artfully in a container. Step One is especially easy—go shopping! You can go to the local nursery, supermarket or, as we did, a big-box home store for your supplies. To get going, you'll need potting soil, a container and an accompanying tray for watering. Then there are the plants—buy enough to

completely cover the soil for the size container you bought. An 8-inch pot might require six or more plants; you really want to pack them in there for the best effect.

Also keep themes, colors, and plant needs in mind. As you'll see here, we created a container of largely tropicals and another of cacti and succulents. In general, try to keep plants with similar culture requirements together. You surely don't want to mix plants requiring lots of light with those that don't like too much sun; depending on where you eventually place the pot, one or the other will surely die. Fortunately, many houseplants have their light requirements clearly stated on a label.

Now that you have your plants, container and tray, let's move on to Step Two—putting it all together.

An Easy
Potted Project
for Winter

Story by Pete Prown
Photography by John Gannon



DESERT DELIGHT



Step One

Using a large, neutral-colored plastic container, we went all out for our tropical pot, combining colors, shapes and patterns with reckless abandon. In this group you'll find more *Peperomia japonica*, as well as *Pilea 'Pan Am'*, *Dracaena 'Florida Beauty'*, *Aphelandra squarrosa 'Stripes Forever'* (green leaf with large white veins), *Fittonia 'Mini White'*, and a pair of wildly variegated crotons (*Codiaeum 'Victoria Gold Bell'* and *C. 'Superstar'*). We also scored a deep-orange *Guzmania 'Calypso'* and, in the bargain bin, a pink and white *Dendrobium 'Jairak'* orchid for a mere seven bucks. Wow!

Step Two

Here, you can see the tall guzmania flanked by the crotons. Keep in mind that most of the small houseplants and tropicals we bought were easily dividable, and we often got *at least* two plants out of each container. So while it may look like there are three or four crotons in this picture, we actually just pulled apart the plants from two tiny containers and planted each one individually. This is a great way to stretch your money.

Step Three

At first we thought that the orange of the guzmania clashed too much with the blue-pink orchid, but then we realized, "Hey, this is the tropics and anything goes!" The end result is a lush, festive grouping of hot colors, foliage and shapes. What could be better in the middle of winter?

HOUSEPLANT HOEDOWN



Step One

Our first pot will contain the cacti and succulents, with a few exceptions, in a shallow container. As with all our creations, we looked for a variety of sizes, colors and textures to evoke a desert-like look.

Among those we chose include two cacti (the taller of which is *Mammillaria elongata* 'Copper King'), a variegated *Cryptanthus*, a pink *Fittonia* 'Juanita', some variegated ivy (*Hedera helix* 'Ingrid Liz'), and the silver, chunky-leaved succulent, *Graptopetalum pentandrum*. For this container, you may also want to spring for a special cactus potting mix to improve drainage.

Step Two

The next step is usually the same for all our containers. Begin by simply placing plants from the *back* to the *front*. The reason is the same as that used by in-ground garden designers—the need to first establish a structure or "bones" in which to place the rest of the plants. While the outdoor designer might use walls or hedges, in our container, the bones are the taller plants that will set the stage for the others.

Step Three

In the finished composition, the two succulents are placed on opposite sides of the bowl, which are then complemented by the off-center cacti. The *Fittonia* made a nice background, while the foreground was filled in with the ivy and hens 'n' chicks (*Sempervivum* sp.)

We chose *Fittonia* because of the color combination with the silvery *Graptopetalum*, but in hindsight it was an error, since it's a low-light lover among the medium- and high-light crowd. The solution is either to move it to another container or simply sacrifice this inexpensive plant and enjoy its colorful qualities while it lasts.



TROPICAL EXPLOSION



Step One

Here is an assemblage of common houseplants: spiky *Dracaena marginata*, *Peperomia japonica* 'Green Valley', the super-durable *Schefflera arboricola* 'Moondrop', the deeply veined *Pilea* 'Moon Valley' and more of the ivy 'Ingrid Liz' as a filler in the foreground. Topping them off is a pair of salmon-orange and cream-colored begonias. We are going to pop these into a pot with a "prairie style" design on its decorative band. Better yet, the pot only cost \$3.98.

Step Two

Again, we worked from the back forwards. The dracaenas filled the back, while the schefflera, begonias and hard-to-see peperomia (on the right) fill the middle zone.

Step Three

For the front, we simply added the pilea and an ivy that trails over the edge. Didn't we tell you this was easy? You could whip one or two of these up before a holiday party and everyone will think you're a wizard. They make great holiday gifts, too.

Final Thoughts

With your plants all potted and ready to go, you can now site them around your house, in areas with the proper amount of sunlight for each. The best part about these group plants is that they aren't forever. You can swap plants in and out at whim, or make over each pot once a year. You can even fill empty areas with summer annuals that you want to bring indoors in autumn. Impatiens and coleus often look fabulous in these containers.

Finally, with all your labors finished, it's time for you to move on to the all-important Step Three—sitting back and marveling at what a talented and clever gardener you are. Better yet, invite some friends over...and let them tell you that for hours.

A First-Timer's Fairy Tale

by Janice Baldwin-Hench

O

nce upon a time—actually two weeks before the 2004 Philadelphia Flower Show—I spotted a small purple ruffle on an orchid sitting in a corner of my greenhouse. As I got closer, I realized that I was looking at the tip of a flower bud, one of five nestled together on a mid-sized *Laeliocattleya*. “It will open just in time for the show,” I thought casually. Suddenly, a question began to take shape. “How difficult is it to exhibit a plant at the Flower Show?” Did Cinderella feel this way when she heard there would be a fancy ball?

Now, with my first Show behind me, I’m happy to report that being a new exhibitor is not as daunting as I had imagined. Although the Show has an international reputation, it also has the neighborly temperament of two gardeners trading plants over the side fence. From the website to the orchid class chair I called on the phone to the passers and stagers on the floor, the words that come to mind are “open-hearted and friendly.”

Every fairy tale needs a kind magician, and mine was Maurice Marietti, co-chair for the orchid classes. “Come to the Post-Entry table early on the first Saturday of the Show. After you enter your plants, you’ll have a chance to wander around a bit and take in the exhibits,” he said. “After I enter the plants!” I thought, incredulously. “I wonder if they’ll be good enough to exhibit?”

Perhaps without Maurice’s help, they would not have been. He handed out cultivation tips as he took off



unnecessary top dressing and firmed up the potting mix on the two orchids my 12-year-old daughter and I placed on the Passing table. “Now cattleyas will take all the room you let them,” he chuckled when he staked and tied up a few sprawling leaves. “Would you like to enter them for two judging cycles? If you can’t make it back to the Show, we’ll enter them for you,” he offered. Still a little dazed, I nodded yes and brought out the 4x6 cards for the Novice Class. Frankly, I wondered when he was going to say, “Bibbety-bobbity-boo!”

So my two orchids went to the ball, showing off their finery among so many other beautifully dressed hopefuls. I saw them there on Monday, carefully displayed and artfully lit, and I knew that another little dream of mine had come true. (Fortunately, I’m already married to a prince.)

Perhaps the week of the Philadelphia Flower Show really is an enchanted one. No one knocked on my door bearing a glass slipper, but on Tuesday morning I listened to a friend’s excited voice message. “Did you know that your orchids won prizes? One has a blue ribbon and one a yellow!” And it was true. In the second Novice Class, my plants placed first and third. I thought they couldn’t look any finer, but I admit that the ribbons sparkled like fairy dust.

But this tale is not about ribbons or winning. It’s a story of appreciation for creating a garden party to which everyone is invited. And unlike Cinderella’s ball, this one happens every year, so that all of us who love the Philadelphia Flower Show can look forward to it. Happily ever after, of course.

Still Sprouting after 30 Years

by Jennifer Reynolds

Winter sun pours into the Shipley School greenhouse as motherly Leila Peck clucks over her teenage charges. Two words cut through the chatter and giggles in constant repetition: "Mrs. Peck! Mrs. Peck!" Mrs. Peck (pictured above, right) is being paged because of "a weird bite out of this leaf" or "a gigantic ant on my container" or concerns that "the judges might crouch down and look up at the underside of these plants!" The fact that hens-and-chicks are featured in the plantings provides a perfect metaphor for what's going on here: Leila Peck is presiding over her 30th year of the Shipley Sprouts program, in which she teaches an extracurricular class on plants at the Shipley School in Bryn Mawr (www.shipleyschool.org). As part of the class, the adolescents enter—and frequently win big at—the Philadelphia Flower Show.

This year, the Sprouts have learned about succulents, and their hanging baskets and container gardens are filled with tiny, juicy-leaved, whimsically-named plants: string of beads (*Senecio rowleyanus*), hens-and-chicks (*Sempervivum* sp.), burro's tails (*Sedum morganianum*), and pinwheel plant (*Aeonium* sp.). The girls perform dirt and dust-ectomies on leaves with tweezers and tiny paint brushes. Alone in the back room, Jesse Storbeck of Broomall pores over a huge tome on succulents, looking up the names for his plantings and making a diagram for the judges.

Mrs. Peck explains, "When the first Shipley greenhouse was built in 1974, Mary Allen, another Shipley parent, and I were asked to 'do something' in the greenhouse. Since Mary had a greenhouse and we were both in a garden club, we agreed. The first April, we planted zucchini seeds

and, by June, we had vines all over the place. We wised up each year after that. At the Show in the mid 1970s, we saw the Rock Garden Society's exhibit on making troughs. We learned how to make troughs using half a watermelon as a mold. It still is my favorite shape and such fun to do!"

This year's Sprout entry included succulents planted in containers made of cement, perlite, and peat moss. According to 9th grader Emily Chapin of Phoenixville, "I got a blue ribbon for a *Muscari* bulb once—that was really cool." Helping her spruce up a hanging basket of succulents is 11th grader Allison Gibbons of Bryn Mawr, who won for her dish garden in 2003.

After the Sprouts put together this year's hanging basket, "Some of Mrs. Peck's friends came in to look at it and we'd done it all wrong!" Heeding some constructive criticism, they re-thought color and placement in both the hanging basket and the trough, making sure the pieces referenced each other.

Bumblebee-like, Mrs. Peck buzzes from container to container, offering encouragement and advice. She pauses to share her favorite Flower Show stories, two of which involve Boy Sprouts. "Angus Campbell was working very hard on his bulb garden entry at the Show. It was agony waiting for the



Photos by John Gannon



judges, but when the blue ribbon was placed on Angus' pot, you could hear his holler throughout the whole Convention Center. I think he even beat *Mrs. Hamilton* [a longtime Flower Show winner].

After "practically living at the Shipley greenhouse" the month before the Show, Mrs. Peck moves into the Pennsylvania Convention Center for the Flower Show, spending nearly every day on scene. When it's all over, no doubt, she will have new ribbons to display in the brick back room, a triumphant answer to that question posed in 1974: *Yes, she can do something with the greenhouse at Shipley.*

A New Life for Flower Show Trees

by Jane Carroll



W

hen Marty Kromer, curator of horticulture for the Philadelphia Zoo, walked into the 2004 Flower Show during setup week, the palm trees in the Central Feature exhibit immediately caught his eye.

"I walked into the Show to check on our exhibit and saw these drop-dead gorgeous palms," he recalls. Marty had been contacting nurseries all over Florida to find palms for the Zoo's PECO Jungle Trek exhibit, which opened this spring. The large specimens in the Central Feature were just what he'd been looking for.

Marty knew what he had to do: "I asked," he said. He inquired what would happen to the palms at the end of the show, and to his delight, PHS president Jane Pepper arranged for them to be donated to the Zoo (www.philadelphiazoo.org).

"The wonderful thing about the Flower Show palms is that they are so big," says Marty. "They give the effect of a canopy over your head." The Jungle Trek exhibit, adjacent to the Zoo's PECO Primate House, was designed to give visitors the feeling of being in a jungle. The seasonal exhibit has an educational focus—Marty calls it "jungle school"—that lets visitors see endangered primates up close and experience what it takes to survive in a jungle. Conversely, it shows the average person what they can do to help the jungle itself survive.

It would have been extremely expensive for the Zoo to buy and ship palms of this size commercially. Still, it was not an easy move for these tropical plants. The Flower Show closed in early March, so the palms—Phoenix palms, black elephant ears, kentia palms and thatch palms—had to endure transportation on a snowy day and a few weeks in a cool storage area before they were acclimated outdoors at the Zoo in late April. In September, the tropical plants are then brought inside for the winter.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you to PHS," says Marty. "The Zoo is delighted to have these plants. They are being put to wonderful use."

For more information on the 2005 Philadelphia Flower Show, visit www.theflowershow.com.



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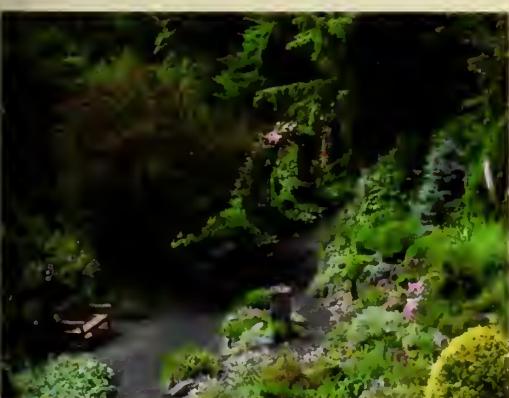
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GARDENS IN PORTLAND AND SEATTLE • JUNE 15-22, 2005

Betsy Gullan, PHS Membership Manager, and Jean Lenehan of JL Tours will guide a group through small city gardens and lush, extensive suburban gardens. We'll also visit outstanding public gardens—the Japanese Garden, Portland Classical Chinese Garden, Bellevue Botanical Garden, the Bloedel Reserve and Heronswood Nursery.

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THE COTSWOLDS AND SEVERN VALLEY • JUNE 5-16, 2005

PHS President Jane Pepper will lead a tour of English gardens in the Cotswolds and the Severn Valley. Steeped in history and culture, this region is studded with beautiful gardens that offer a study in contrasts: large and small, urban and rural, traditional and modern.



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Travel with Betsy Gullan, PHS Membership Manager, and Jean Lenehan of JL Tours to the stunning landscapes of New Zealand. We'll visit Auckland, Wellington, Queenstown, Christchurch, Dunedin and other cities; private gardens; the natural wonders of the kauri forest; Southern Alps and the Milford Sound.



Swimming in Balance

How to Maintain a Healthy Water Garden

Story by Charles Thomas

Good landscaping tips aren't just for solid-earth gardeners. Surely, the growing number of water gardeners also need to know the best methods to care for their ponds, fish and aquatic plants. Fortunately for them, the easiest approach is also considered the best by some experts. Let's dip our toes in the water and find out more.

CLEAR WATER VS. NATURAL PONDS

There are two schools of thought on outdoor water gardens. One group wants perfectly clear water so they can see their goldfish or koi, even when they're swimming at the bottom. We'll call this the "clear-water pond" approach. The second group prefers a more natural aesthetic, where the water looks like that in an outdoor pond or lake—we'll call this the "natural pond" approach. The water isn't completely transparent, but it isn't green and smelly with algae, either. And, of course, you can see your goldfish when they come to the surface to eat.

Clear-water ponds are like large aquariums. They have rocks and gravel at the bottom to facilitate the growth of beneficial bacteria. They also use power filters to clean the water, creating that super-transparent look (some owners of these ponds have even been known to put on their bathing trunks and go "swimmin' with the fishes" on hot summer days). Clear-water ponds can accommodate more fish than the natural pond,

thanks to the filters and gravel bottom.

Still, there are downsides to consider. Clear-water ponds require hefty investments in hardware such as skimmer boxes, bio-filters and other plumbing supplies. They also need frequent maintenance to clean the filters and keep muck off the rocks that line the bottom of the pool. I often hear woeful tales from gardeners who were initially pleased with their new clear-water garden, only to become dispirited as the maintenance fell behind and the ponds became dirty.

It comes down to a personal decision: Clear-water ponds are the way to go if you



absolutely must have crystal-clear water for your prized koi. If you have the money, you can have a professional clean the pond for you. But most gardeners who like to garden themselves prefer the natural water garden. And if time and expense are considerations for you, the natural pond really can't be beat.

The natural pond imitates the way Mother Nature manages a small body of water. Its main ingredients for success are fish (which eat insects and algae), water-cleansing plants (such as *Anacharis* sp, which naturally "filter" the water) and perhaps a circulating pump (which keeps the water moving, oxygenates it, and reduces mosquito problems). Proper stocking with fish is also vital in creating a healthy, low-maintenance water garden, since they eat insects, various types of algae and other unhealthy threats.

Given those essentials, the natural pond allows the gardener to sit back and enjoy the beauty, peace, quiet, and tranquility that a water garden provides.



Left: Aside from being healthy for your pond, aquatic plants can echo the colors in your terrestrial garden.

10 NATURAL POND TIPS

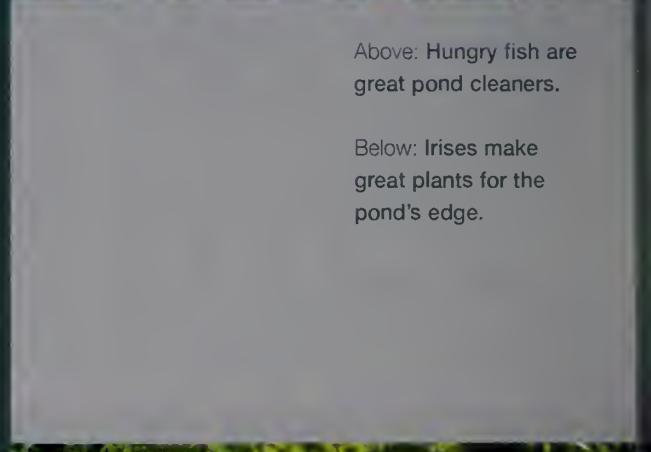
Here is a formula for success with your first water garden:

- Cover 2/3 to 3/4 of the surface with waterlilies and other floating foliage. This will prevent your pond's water from getting too warm, which would encourage algae growth.
- Stock one submerged plant (like *Anacharis* sp.) per 1 to 2 square feet of surface. These plants clean the water by absorbing nutrients that otherwise would stimulate algae growth.
- Stock one black Japanese snail per 1 to 2 square feet of surface. Hungry snails keep the bottom and sides of your pond super clean and don't require any maintenance—they find their own food.
- Stock no more than 1 inch in length of goldfish (up to 6 inches, which could be either six 1-inch fish or two 3-inch fish, for example) per every 5 to 10 gallons of water. You don't want more fish than your "natural" ecosystem can handle; otherwise some will likely die off. Allow twice as many gallons of water per inch of koi.
- Optional: Re-circulate and filter the total volume of water once every 2 to 6 hours with a submerged electric pump (plugged into a ground-fault interrupter, or GFI, electric outlet outside of the pool). This is good for aerating the water.
- Although a pump and filter are not required for a successful natural pond, the growth in size and number of fish over a period of years may call for it. But generally, stocking the pond in this manner avoids the need for a skimmer (and its daily maintenance), or for covering the bottom with tons of rocks and gravel that require annual cleaning of accumulated sludge.
- If your natural pond does have a pump, fish experts recommend shutting it off during freezing weather. During the winter, fish rest at the bottom in water warmed by the ground beneath it and insulated by strata of water above it. Re-circulating the water causes the water temperature to homogenize; the warm bottom water gets colder and can affect the health of your fish.
- A frozen waterfall is a romantic idea and can make a spectacular winter ice show. But disaster may result if the power fails and the water line freezes. Then the owner may face a broken water line and perhaps a damaged pump.
- Fertilize plants, according to directions, once or twice a month during the growing season. Prune them as needed; some, like parrot feather, are rampant growers.
- Feed goldfish daily—as much as they can consume within 10 minutes—when the water temperature maintains 50°F or higher. Eventually, they will all rush to the surface whenever they sense you bringing their supper!

Charles Thomas is a well-known expert on home water gardening. You can email him at lilypoms@super.net.com.



Above: Hungry fish are great pond cleaners.

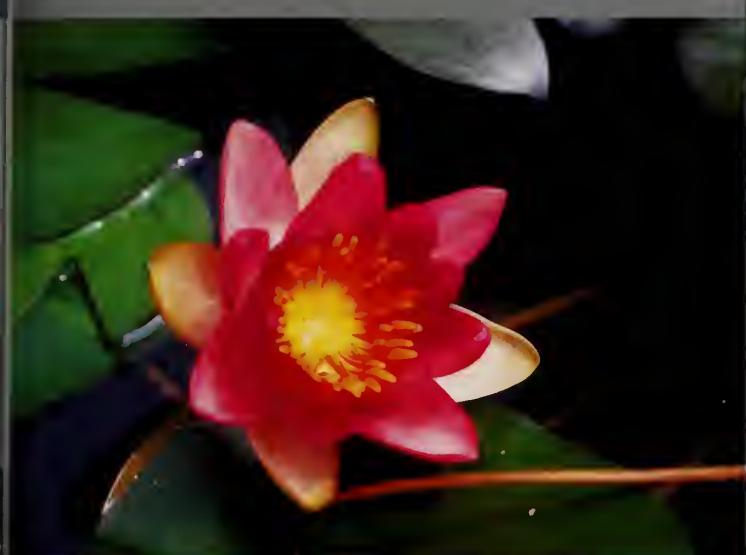


Below: Irises make great plants for the pond's edge.

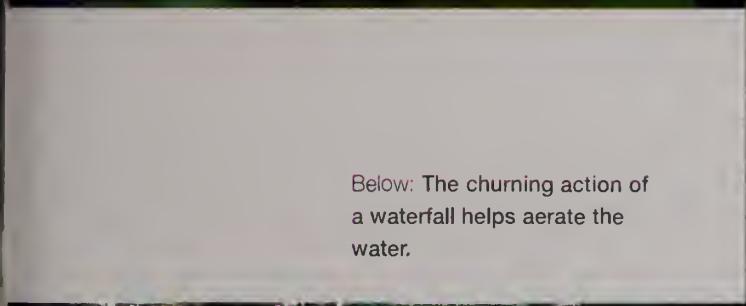




Water gardeners have a wide variety of tropical and hardy waterlilies to choose from.



Above: This small pond just uses plants, snails and circulating water to keep it clean.



Below: The churning action of a waterfall helps aerate the water.





Judy Glattstein is an enthusiastic gardener, author, and lecturer who appreciates bulbs as "plants in a package." You can visit her website at www.bellewood-gardens.com

BOUNTY of BULBS

by Judy Glattstein

Cyclamen

The world of taxonomy is fashioned into two camps: the splitters and the lumpers. Previously the majority of geophytes—bulbous, cormous, and tuberous plants—were found in the three plant families of Liliaceae, Amaryllidaceae, and Iridaceae, but the splitters have chipped away and separated out Hyacinthaceae, Alliaceae, and more. No matter, for the plants know who they are, and a number of relatively minor players have always found underground storage organs to be a handy, dandy way of getting through hard times of winter cold or summer drought. Consider primroses, those cherished harbingers of spring. Their family, Primulaceae, contains an equally beloved geophytic member, in the genus *Cyclamen*.

You don't even have to be a gardener to be familiar with cyclamen. Though perhaps not as ubiquitous as poinsettias, cyclamen are popular as winter-blooming plants for the holiday season. Developed from the tender species, *Cyclamen persicum*, earlier cultivars were bloated, overlarge selections of the wilding native to the eastern Mediterranean region. Red, pink, or white flowers like badminton shuttlecocks dance above mottled foliage. Arising from a fat tuber, the plants need cool temperatures, bright light, and moist but not saturated soils. Often the plants developed mildew and rot as a result of overhead watering, and when leaves turned yellow as an announcement they wanted a drier resting period, it was too often interpreted as a sign of decline and death, with the poor tubers tossed into the garbage.

Modern cultivars are daintier and more modest in size but have the same requirements. Water the soil, not the foliage. Keep cool and free from drafts. Allow the plants to dream away the summer in a dormant state, encased in their soil-filled pot. And in this manner cyclamen may be kept from year to year to year. In 1973 my sister sent a tuber of the true species home to me from Jerusalem, where she lives. More than 30 years later that self-same tuber is still healthy and happy, spending summers aestivating and winters growing. By now over 6 inches across, it is a signal example of the longevity that is possible.

Not all cyclamen require the sheltered confines of a container and a cool bedroom or demand a greenhouse for their survival. Both early spring-flowering Persian violet (*Cyclamen coum*) and the autumn-

blooming ivy-leaved cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium*) find Zone 6 woodland gardens very much to their liking. Persian violet produces leaves at summer's end; they are roundish, orbicular-to-reniform, dark green leaves handsomely marked with silver above and flushed with red on the underside. Flower buds form at the same time. And there they sit, both foliage and tightly furled flower buds, like cerise-pink to white miniature umbrellas, through the worst of winter's cold and snow until the lengthening days of late February and early March signal that it is time to bloom. By May, it is all over for that growing season, and the Persian violet again goes summer dormant. A site with reasonably good drainage—moist yet well drained—moderately high in organic matter, and nestled among the roots of deciduous trees suits both of these hardy cyclamen species best. Maintain a mulch of organic matter, such as shredded leaves.

Ivy-leaved cyclamen also awakens in late summer. This species begins with flowers, dainty little pink or white butterflies dancing over naked ground in late August or early September. Then, in late September or early October, the leaves appear, more or less ivy-like, dark green with silver markings. The leaves resist winter's snow and freezing temperatures. Seed capsules swell with spring, and once the seeds are released, the plants retreat for a summer snooze until autumn's approach awakens them again.

Welcome the winter solstice with Persian cyclamen, and plan to add the hardy kind to your garden, once the snow melts and the ground thaws. 



Photo by Judy Glattstein

SOURCES

Cyclamen are infrequently available at local nurseries. Mail order is often the best means of acquisition. Here are a few good sources:

ARROWHEAD ALPINES

P.O. Box 857
Fowlerville, MI 48836
517-223-3581
www.arrowhead-alpines.com

HANSEN NURSERY

P.O. Box 1228
North Bend, OR 97459
541-756-1156
email: hansen.nursery@verizon.net

PLANT DELIGHTS NURSERY

9241 Sauls Road
Raleigh, NC 27603
919-772-4794, www.plantdel.com

SENECA HILL PERENNIALS

3712 Co. Rt. 57
Oswego, NY 13126
www.senecahillperennials.com

MADE in the SHADE

by Carolyn Walker

Carolyn Walker will be at Carolyn's Shade Garden in Bryn Mawr, PA where she maintains several acres of shady display areas. She can be reached at carolynsshadegardens@verizon.net or 610-525-4664



Hellebores

Beyond Lenten Roses (Part 1)

More gardeners are growing *Orientalis* hybrid hellebores (formerly known as Lenten roses) these days, and that's great. Their large, colorful flowers, which open in February and remain ornamental for months, make the hybrids the showiest and most popular hellebores. Their elegant form, winter-green leaves, adaptability to a wide variety of cultural conditions, and ability to repel deer certainly add to the attraction. However, the *Orientalis* hybrids are only part of the hellebore story: there are 15 species hellebores that are gardenworthy and, in most cases, highly desirable plants. I am going to introduce you to two of the more readily available species below and to more unusual species in the next issue.

In February or March, *Helleborus niger*, or Christmas rose (pictured bottom), blooms with 3-inch, pure white, outward-facing flowers, which age to a beautiful pink and even deep rose. The blue-gray, leathery leaves have seven to nine segments and are ornamental in their own right. The plants are about 12 inches tall and often have dark red stems. I do not cut off all my Christmas roses' leaves as the flowers emerge—as I do with *Orientalis* hybrids—because the leaves showcase the flowers. However, the flowers and leaves are on separate stems so you can thin the leaves for an unobstructed view of the flowers or cut them back completely if they are ratty after a severe winter. I highly recommend *H. niger* 'Potter's Wheel', which has immense 5-inch, symmetrical flowers with showy golden centers and was given the Royal Horticultural Society Award of Merit in 1958. Make sure that any 'Potter's Wheel' you purchase is veg-

etatively propagated, as the seed strain is not supposed to be true.

Christmas roses are said to be difficult to establish. My best clumps are in part shade and compost-enriched soil with average moisture. They are drought tolerant once established, and I never water them after that. Nor do I give them extra lime as recommended in the literature. You can divide them in early spring by digging up the whole plant, washing off the soil, and cutting through the woody rhizome, leaving foliage and roots on both halves. Christmas roses are said to be subject to a fungal disease, but I have never seen any sign of this problem.

Helleborus argutifolius, or Corsican hellebore (pictured top), produces large clusters of exotic, pale green flowers with yellow centers on the ends of last year's leaf stems in March in our area. The leaves are glossy green and marbled with ivory. A distinctive prickly fringe surrounds the stiff, three-part leaves, which can have red highlights. Corsican hellebore is 20 to 30 inches tall, upright and spreading with an architectural presence that is probably its most valuable attribute. It makes a breathtaking specimen and can easily be substituted for a small, evergreen shrub. I also grow the variegated Corsican hellebore, purchased as 'Janet Starnes Strain' (also sold as simply 'Janet Starnes'), which is quite beautiful.

Corsican hellebore is tough and adaptable to a variety of soil and light conditions. In fact, it can take almost full sun and is drought tolerant because of its Mediterranean origin but also does well in open shade. Despite its versatility, its major drawback is that repeated snowfalls and

severe winters can leave it battered and unsightly. Although the flowers will usually still open, I often cut back the plants to the ground. I lose that season's flowers but am rewarded almost immediately with a flush of new growth. To propagate, collect seedlings from under the mother plant and move to other areas of the garden.

Site both Christmas rose and Corsican hellebore where you can see them in winter to enjoy their early flowers and green leaves. Indeed, the path to my own front door is happily adorned with these four-season performers. 

Photos by Carolyn Walker



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Story and photos by John Gannon

It's a beautiful morning in late September, with a softness to the light that seems a little out of place on this gritty street of row houses. A touch of surrealism is in the air. It feels like a movie. Now imagine a film crew photographing a red balloon bobbing along the top of a wall (an homage to a famous French film). Now imagine the balloon suddenly plunging over the other side and out of sight. "Cut!" snaps director Harry Wiland. "We have to film that again."

Wiland was here working with our Philadelphia Green program to film *Edens Lost and Found*, a two-hour documentary set to air on PBS next year. *Edens* will tell a tale of four cities—Philly, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Seattle—all of whom are using greening and environmental innovation as a means toward urban



Lights, Camera...Greening!

rebirth. On this block in the city's Fishtown neighborhood, the crew was filming a series of vignettes, a "day in the life" of this community.

As fascinating as the scene in front of the camera was, there was plenty of excitement behind it, too. A few staff members from Philadelphia Green acted as the *de facto* production team for the local shoots, contacting interviewees, suggesting projects to highlight, and finding interesting eateries where the crew could get a second wind before the next shot.

Stories abound. On one day, the Philadelphia Green team had to organize a group of 15 kids in school uniforms—on a Sunday—to recreate a typical trek to school. On another occasion, they had to find two young lovers for a scene in a neighborhood park and then find two more young smoochers at the last minute, when the first pair got snagged in traffic. Throw into the mix a search for a cellist and violinist, driving around Logan Circle 15 times at precisely 8 mph to get the perfect shot, filming the Mayor, and coordinating visits to a pretzel factory, brewery, various parks and gardens (and did we mention a 75-year-old shoemaker?), and you get just a small glimpse of the Herculean logistics going on behind the scenes.

"It was quite a challenge to get everything that Harry wanted," says Philadelphia Green office assistant Krista Raneri-Cheeseman. "But my motto was, 'What Harry wants, Harry gets!'"

There were also some unexpected benefits. "For the neighbors, a visit from the film crew made it seem like their community had a story to tell," says Philadelphia Green's Joan Reilly. "It gave everyone a real sense of pride."



For more on this film, visit www.edenslostandfound.org/philadelphia. *Edens Lost and Found* will be broadcast nationally on PBS in the fall of 2005.

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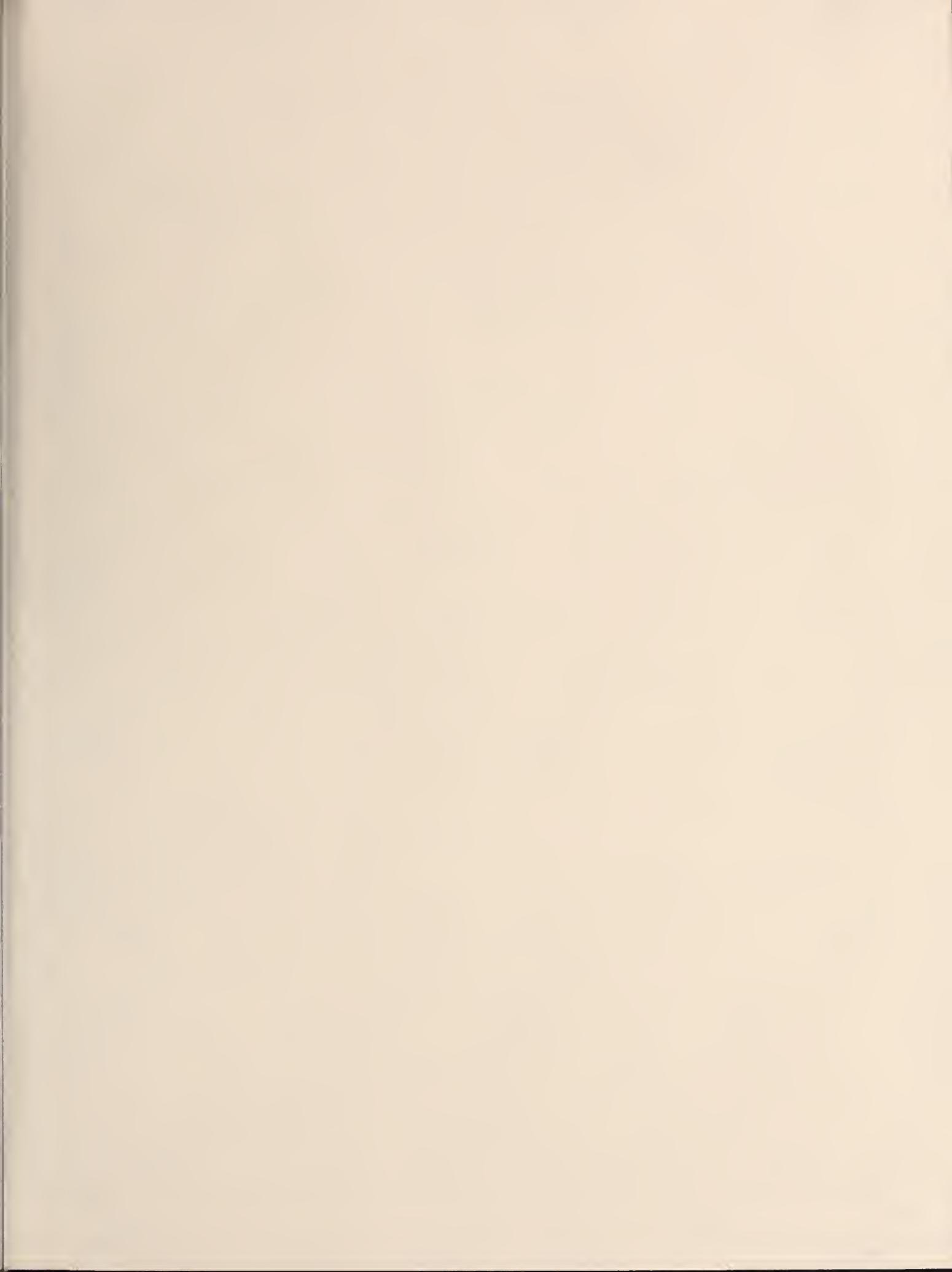
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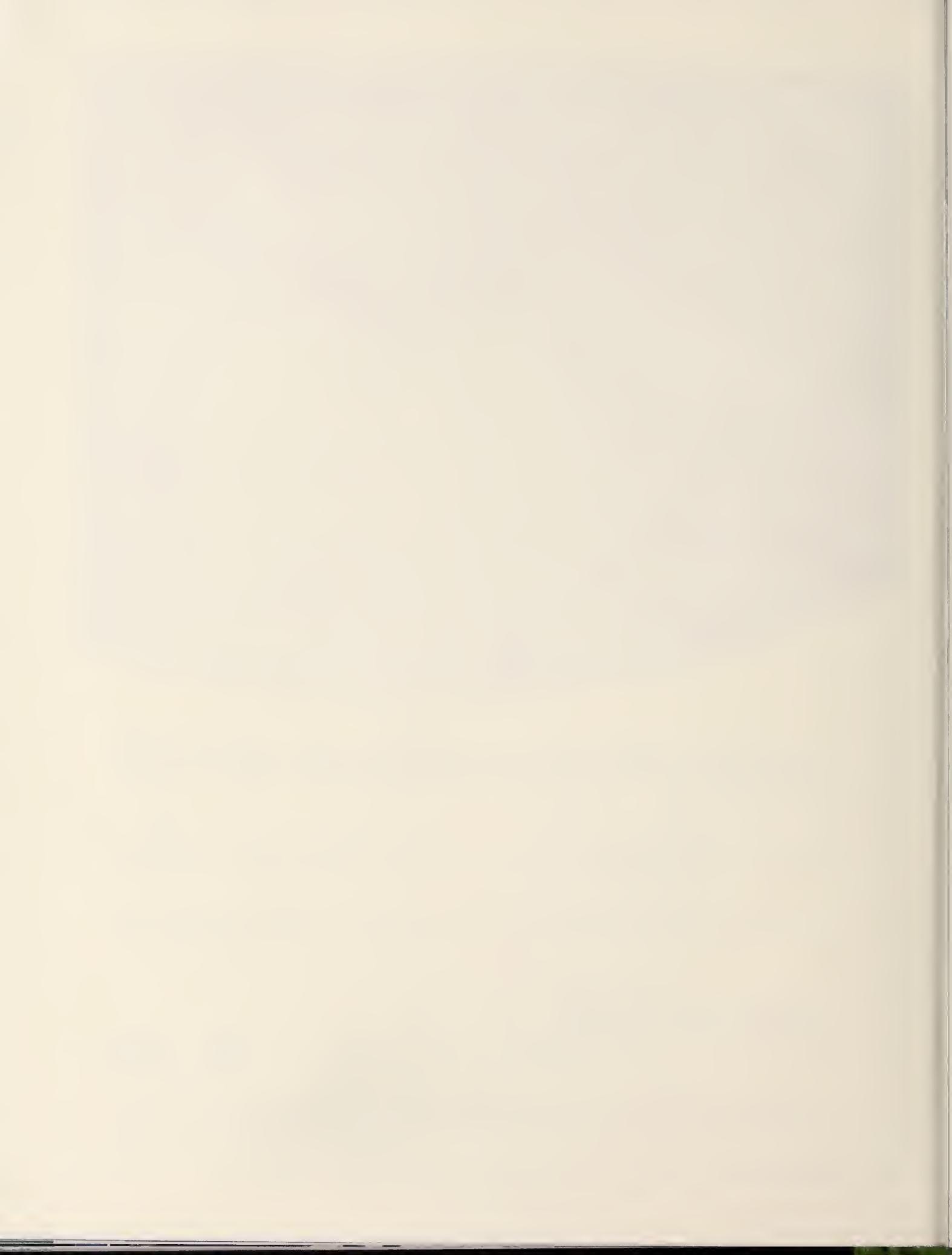
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